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BRITANNIA and EVE

VOL. 45 No. 6 DECEMBER, 1952

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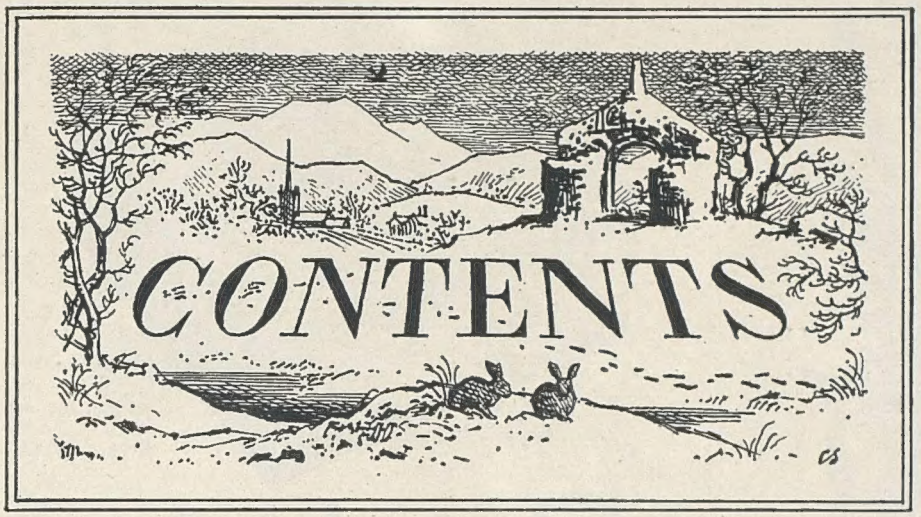

Cover Design—*by Pauline Baynes*

"We remember a German of the household of the late Queen Caroline making what he termed a Christmas Tree for a Juvenile party at that festive season. The tree was a branch of some evergreen fastened to a board. Its boughs bent under the weight of gilt oranges, almonds, etc. and under it was a neat model of a farm house, surrounded by figures of animals, etc., and all due accompaniments." Footnote—by A. J. Kempe, in his 1836 edition of the Losely MSS.

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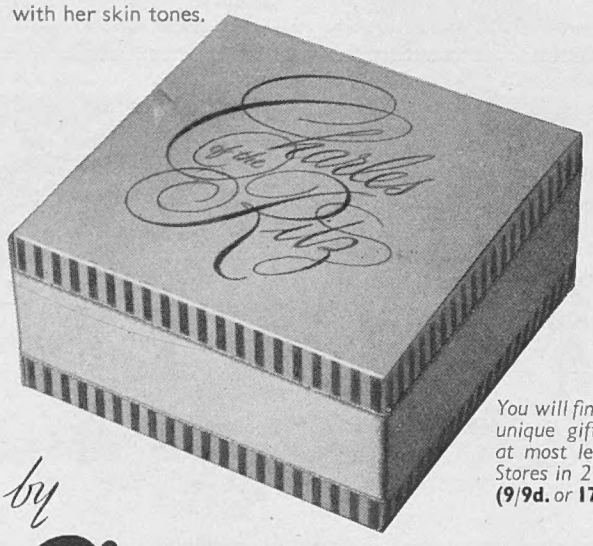

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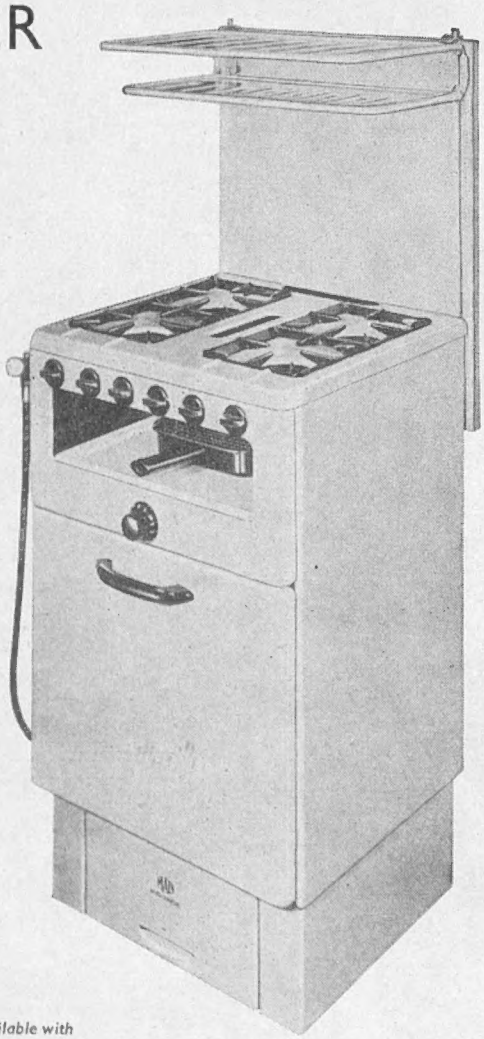

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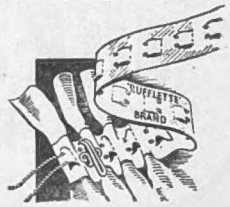

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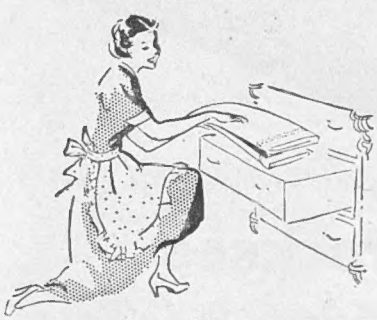

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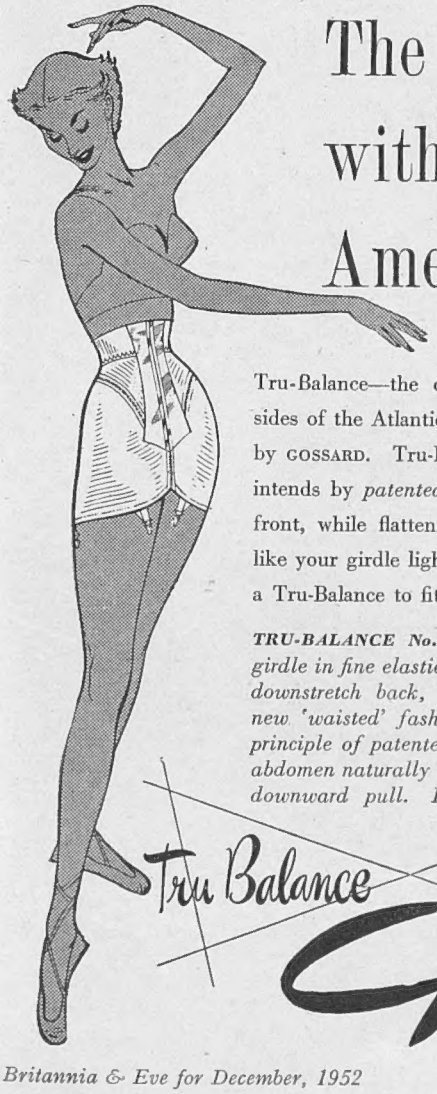

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THE CHRISTMAS-TREE

By CHARLES LLOYD-JONES.

THE village churchyard had been mown at the onset of winter and raked free of leaves. It was clipped tight up to the eighteenth-century head-stones. A sententious critic might have said that the whole place looked a little too much like a Christmas-card to be true: the luminous green of smooth turf, the darker green of three great yews, the creamy-grey stone of the little church, and orange-red against the soft veiling of afternoon mist, two cotoneaster bushes thick with berries.

A pretty eight-year-old girl was waiting by the gate, but only for her cocker pup to finish his ditch-hunting and catch her up. She was thinking seriously about ferret-breeding, hoping her Christmas money would come to enough to buy a doe. But her attention was caught when the vicar came out of the church with three women, his most admiring helpers, and left the door wide open.

Distinguished, cassock-clad, he came down the flagged path, turning every few steps to appraise the scene behind him and its effect on the women. Framed within the Gothic doorway stood a beautifully proportioned Christmas-tree. It was lit

Framed within the Gothic doorway stood a beautifully proportioned Christmas-tree. Elizabeth went round it, frightened and in doubt.

with candles, not electric bulbs, that stood erect and had been arranged in a perfect composition.

The child made a sound of surprise, and stood gazing, till the vicar greeted her: "Hullo, Elizabeth."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Pevensey," she said politely.

"How does our tree look from the gate? Candles look pretty?"

"May I go and look inside?"

"The church is always open to everyone. Didn't you know?" He smiled, as if tolerant of children's ignorance; but one of the women smiled, too, at his unspoken criticism. The child saw her and understood.

"Thank you, Mr. Pevensey," she said, and went with her pup towards the church. Half-way to the porch she said: "Wait outside, Ben," and called out in explanation, "He's not house-trained yet."

"Otherwise she'd have taken him in," one of the women commented.

"It's not her fault," the vicar said. "And no doubt there were cattle at the Manger."

Elizabeth walked slowly round the tree, frightened and in doubt. Suddenly she stopped and cried out. She was standing with clenched hands and tears running down her face when Mrs. Gittins, the church cleaner, shuffled up to ask what was wrong.

"It's my tree! I knew it was my tree, from outside! Grand-dad wouldn't have given him my tree! He's dug it up and stolen it!"

"Couldn't be, Miss Liz. Christmas-trees are all alike."

"They're not! It was the prettiest tree in the whole dell. That's why Grand-dad marked it for old Tom to dig up. Look." A small, accusing finger pointed out a knife-cut on the trunk.

"Never, dearie. That's how anyone would mark the trees they were going to dig. There now, come along with me and ask the vicar."

Elizabeth had stopped crying. Breeding, and young courage trained not to put up with injustice, took her beyond the woman's control. "No," she said. "He's stolen my tree. Good-night, Mrs. Gittins." But she was not brave enough to walk past the vicar and the women by the gate. She turned round the church and took a field path home, numb and bewildered, ignoring her pup. She had always sensed that her grandfather hated the vicar, though she had never known why. Perhaps he had known all along that the vicar was a burglar. That would explain everything. Her grandfather was very kind, but very strict and honest: he had never broken his word to her.

Colonel Wenlock put his revengeful granddaughter off his knee, sent her to help shut up the hens, and appealed to his wife.

"Well, Betty, what does A do now?"

"But what can have happened?"

"The parson didn't steal my tree himself: that's certain. He doesn't know a spade from a bucket. He'd hint for someone to give him one or sell him one cheap. If he'd asked me straight I'd have given him a tree."

Betty smiled. "Would you?"

"Couldn't refuse, at Christmas. There's something about Christmas older than anything he preaches. But he's let this happen, and how am I to avoid a row?"

"Must you have one?"

"How can I help it? If it weren't for Liz it'd be rather a good joke the vicar doing his Christmas decorations with stuff pinched from the heathen. I'd pull his leg about it next time he

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
TERENCE FREEMAN

tried to convert me. But you couldn't tell Liz that."

"But what Mrs. Gittins said about the mark. Couldn't you dig another good tree, and mark it the same? Liz wouldn't know."

The old man's mouth went down at the corners; his hands clenched on his knees. "Not if I'd got one ten times as good. Anyway, I haven't. That tree stuck out a mile: that's why it was an obvious one to pinch, just by the lane going up to Stanley's Beacon. But I went all through the plantation looking for a better before I marked it. Only, that's not the point. I've never broken my word to Liz, and she's been taught what to think about people who steal. Do we tell her that you can get away with cheating if only you're nuisance enough? Christmas is a nice time for her to be let down and no one do anything about it."

"Could we tell her that whoever dug up the tree didn't know it was hers, and it'd be a shame to make the village children give it up now?"

"Liz'd give her favourite dinner to a kid who looked hungry: she wouldn't wait to be asked. But you couldn't fool her with a story about the kids wanting a tree in church with no presents on it.

Presently Elizabeth came out of the cottage with Syd. Under one arm was a box. The Colonel began to chuckle. "By gad, she's done a deal with him," he said to the vicar with a smile.

It's only a bit of that showman's fancy-work. And isn't it the whole idea that children shouldn't be fooled?"

* * *

The old man was getting angry. His wife said gently, "That's an awkward one to argue out over Christmas, of all times." He laughed, more at himself than at what he was saying: "The season when the whole frightened world's got to fool itself or bust. But what am I to do? I've been spoiling for a row with that parson for years, and here's the chance. But if I take it, at Christmas, I'm going to bust this village open."

"Why not give him a chance? Make him see that someone pinched Liz's tree. He'd have to give it back. We could let him have another."

"My dear, he'd be in as bad a jam as I am. Those women have seen the tree. Mrs. Gittins heard Liz. He'll never dare admit to them that one of his faithful is a sneak-thief. I've no proof. What's a scratch of a knife? He wouldn't lie about it, but he'd believe what suits him. Think what he manages to believe in the course of his job."

"It might be worth going to see him."

"I might ask him to come and see me," he said unpromisingly.

"Perhaps if I asked him to come——"

"All right. Go on. I'm not stopping you."

She took up the telephone. "It's Mrs. Wenlock, the Manor. Can I speak to the vicar?"

There was surprise and defensiveness in the voice of the vicar's sister: "Oh! How do you do? I'm afraid Mr. Pevensey is out, rehearsing the carol-singers. And after that he's got to call on Mrs. Maggs. She's very ill. They've accused her poor little girl of stealing money at school."

"Oh, the Magpie." The pilfering child's well-earned nickname slipped out before she could check it.

"So cruel," the vicar's sister said coldly. "Poor Mrs. Maggs went right down with a heart attack."

"Perhaps I'll try to get him in the morning. Good-night." She shook her head at her husband. "Out," she said. "And the Magpie's picked another pocket, and her mother's put on another attack."

" Bad time to tell him the Magpie 's not the only one."

Elizabeth came in again, rested her elbows on the Colonel's knee and looked up hopefully.

" Hens all fed ? " he asked, his eyes teasing her.

Elizabeth took a breath. " I stirred the mash. Old Tom said I 'd stirred enough. Can we go and fetch my tree now ? "

" Not to-night, Liz. The vicar 's out."

" In the morning ? "

She was a charmer, and like most charming small girls an instinctive flirt. But she was not now an embryo-woman wheedling an old man who was devoted to her. She was all child, her faith badly shaken, clinging to the person she respected and trusted above all. She could not remember her parents : her irreligious grandfather was to her a clearer and more important figure than most Christian children's idea of God. The Colonel was not a conceited man, and he knew what he had let himself in for.

" I 'll see him in the morning."

Next day the Colonel dodged Elizabeth and went out early after breakfast. He reckoned on catching the vicar as he came out of the church, where he read matins, usually alone, every morning. They met, with the churchyard gate shut between them. The vicar was twenty years the younger man and usually annoyed the Colonel by deferring to his age. The vicar was a man of peace and hoped the Colonel would like it : the Colonel thought it was humbug. But this morning the vicar was looking worried, with no arts to spare for studied courtesies.

" Good morning, Colonel."

" 'Morning."

" I 'm sorry I was out when Mrs. Wenlock telephoned. I suppose it was about the Christmas-tree ? "

" Yes. Did Biddy Gittins come to you about it ? "

" Naturally. She was most distressed to see little Elizabeth so upset. I wondered myself what could have happened when she went off across the field."

" Well ? "

" Of course, the child was mistaken. But I 'm most grieved about it."

" I 'd like to see the tree myself."

* * *

The vicar opened the gate ; they walked to the church in silence, as far apart as they could without looking silly. The story must be out in the village by now, and though the men disagreed and disliked each other, both wanted to avoid a village feud. They must not appear in public like two quarrelling boys. The Colonel went in alone and was out again after a glance at the tree.

" It 's the tree I marked for Liz, Colonel, I assure you——" he said.

" Who sold it to you ? "

" Sydney Gittins. That 's why Mrs. Gittins was so distressed."

" You said she was distressed because of Liz."

" Yes, of course, knowing that the child was upsetting herself unnecessarily."

" Unnecessarily ! That 's Liz's tree. I grew it and marked it."

" Colonel, the man is not here to defend himself. How can you prove this accusation ? "

" How can you prove a lot of things you say ? "

" Could we perhaps keep to the point ? "

The Colonel turned his back and looked up at the graceful 500-year-old tower of the little church. The vicar looked over the wide valley where for as many years Wenlocks had hunted and made love, worked alongside their own farm-hands and earned the trust of the whole little community. They turned again to face each other simultaneously.

" I 'd give a lot to have your co-operation in the parish," the vicar said.

The Colonel could not help smiling almost genially. " What about giving me Liz's tree ? And no questions asked."

The vicar wavered, almost made the casuistical gesture, but shook his head. " I 'm sorry, Colonel. I believe we don't want to fight. But a lot of people in the village know by now that this accusation has been made. I couldn't do what you ask. If it rested only between the two of us——"

" You honestly believe that Syd Gittins didn't pinch Liz's tree ? "

" He 's worked for me for years. A bit of fencing ; and keeping the rabbits down. And his wife——"

" And his wife went straight home to him yesterday and told him to cook up an alibi, quick."

" He showed me three other trees he 'd got marked in exactly the same way, and the receipted bill for the four."

" Overdoing it a bit. Where he dug up Liz's tree there 's a hole, loosely filled in and carefully covered with pine needles."

" No ? "

" Yes."

The vicar looked the Colonel in the eyes. Then he sighed. " But that 's really very wicked of him. What are we to do ? Please, let me settle this. You won't go to the police ? "

" I 'm a magistrate. I 'm the last landowner left in the place. I want peace here. If Gittins denied it I don't think I 'd get a conviction. And if I got a conviction—— Think, man, think. Would anyone outside a loony-bin charge a popular poacher at Christmas with pinching a tree for the church ? "

" But I must speak to him."

" You 've spoken, and he 's denied it. We 're both beaten. You 're a receiver of stolen goods (*Continued on page 72*)

Elizabeth's gaze was far away across the fields as she walked with the Colonel on one side of her and the vicar on the other. " D'you see them over there ? " she said. " Our first lambs. Aren't they lovely ? "

THE DAYS BEFORE TRIAL

The French judicial system is a complicated and slow-moving organization

By Ferdinand Tuohy

FRENCH detectives have had more than their fair share of limelight, what with Gaston Leroux's Arsène Lupin, A. E. W. Mason's Inspector Hanaud, and Simenon's Maigret—to name only the three top ones.

A further powerful boosting—this time on American television—is foreshadowed by the presence in Paris of a team of six American writers under a literary director, all digging out material so that Edward G. Robinson may enact a character modelled on Maigret.

French "police-inspectors" have brains and they know how to use them. The national quickness of mind and intuition stand them in special stead. They can be brilliant in method, penetration and analysis. Yet that doesn't prevent their efforts going adrift in a sea of overlapping, professional jealousy, bungling, "playing to the gallery," politics and prejudices, faking, funny work with clues and traces, and general queering of the evidence.

The Maigrets in real life are far from being responsible for all the foregoing weals on the fair cheek of Justice. But they contribute their share in the company of an assortment of police forces and of the French judicial system itself.

There seems to be little doubt but that the Occupation and the Resistance coarsened the latter and accentuated previous blemishes. One or two glaring cases have demonstrated this, to say nothing of the success of Marcel Aymé's play *Other People's Heads*, a scathing indictment of the whole judicial system.

A young man named Jean Dehaye was condemned to twelve years imprisonment in connection with robbery and murder charges on the basis of a confession extracted from him during a seventy-two-hour interrogation by the police. After three years of the sentence had run, a confession to the murder was made by another man in prison on another charge, and the case was started anew against this man and two other persons.

Attention has been drawn to official sloth and negligence by the suspended trial of Mme. Marie Besnard, on a charge of murdering eleven persons, including her parents and two husbands, by administering arsenic. Although she had been in prison for nearly three years, awaiting trial, gross negligence became apparent in the manner in which analyses had been carried out on the corpses of the persons she was alleged to have murdered.

The Drummond murders speedily focused attention on police methods. No guard was put on the site of the crime. Tourists, local inhabitants and police were at liberty to tread on possibly revealing footprints, to touch the victims' station wagon, to examine their belongings, and to finger the carbine, "the arm of the crime." Bloodstains on the bumper went unexamined and only one projectile (of eight fired) was haphazardly picked up days afterwards.

And all the time detective-inspectors talked "for the headlines," extracting a maximum of personal publicity.

I THOUGHT of Dr. Edmond Locard, pre-war head of the Lyons Laboratory of Police Technique, and of his son and assistant, Jacques, when I read of the presence of a Locard on the scene of the Drummond murders, not so far south of Lyons. Dr. Locard was the originator of detection by dust specks and an accepted virtuoso in the general field of deduction from traces left behind, and the thought took shape: How all the police and detection work at Lurs made a mockery of the Locard principles and practice!

Dr. Locard had great faith in crime detection by scientific handling. But his attitude was one of modesty amounting to reticence even after the greatest care taken. "For my part," he told me, "I shall never forget that it was a mistake by Bertillon that sent Dreyfus to Devil's Island. I learnt under the great savant, and I shall never forget that!"

(Bertillon was the perfecter, not the inventor of the finger-print system to which his name was given, but his tragic mistake over Dreyfus had nothing to do with finger-prints: he wrongly identified some writing on a blotting-pad as that of the accused Jewish staff officer.)

On the wall of the Crime Museum attached to that Lyons police laboratory is a series of photographic close-ups spread over less than a minute and showing the progressive guillotining of a man.

It seems to me that the time is ripe for applying slow motion treatment to the French judicial system as it functions in respect of the capital offence.

A murder is committed.

There were six hundred murders a year, of all sorts, before the war. The total has probably gone up to-day—like most other things. Anyway, there is plenty of room for (*Continued on page 72*)

MAWNAN SMITH'S

Fred Bason

HERE is a question to ponder after the Christmas dinner, when you are gathered round the fire cracking walnuts: If you were given £100 to spend on a Christmas party—where would you hold it and who would you ask?

I was caught out by this one last year, so now I come prepared.

Mawnan Smith would hold his party in a Cornish inn, near the little village from which he takes his name, where the ferry crosses from Helford to the Ferry Boat Inn. Here where Daphne du Maurier comes to write her books—the original Frenchman's Creek is only a mile away—is our venue. A perfect spot for a Christmas party; a roaring log fire in the hall, glasses of golden Cornish mead, oysters and turkey and good fellowship on every hand.

Like Dr. Johnson I believe that the great source of pleasure is variety—so let's have guests who are individualists; characters with stories to tell and friendliness to unite them.

First on my list are Captain Peter Churchill and his wife Odette. You will have heard already how they both worked as saboteurs in France with the Resistance during the war; how they were captured, and how eventually, after the most fantastic adventures, they married.

But what are they like at a party? Gay and lively and full of amusing stories. No-one who did not know what they had been through would ever believe such depths of experience and bravery could ever be so lightly concealed.

Peter is tallish and dark-haired, with spectacles. Odette is fair and slim and as elegant as only a Frenchwoman can be.

Peter captained Cambridge University at ice-hockey in the thirties, and thereafter tried his luck at silver-fox farming, at publicity, at metallurgy. It took the war to discover what he was brilliantly suited for: the man behind the scenes in another country and working for his own.

His book, *Of Their Own Choice*, published by Hodder & Stoughton this autumn, tells how he and other individualists like him volunteered of their own choice (hence the title) for these missions of sabotage.

After tests and trials and training he paddled himself into Cannes in a canvas canoe from a British submarine on an evening eleven years ago next month (January), with orders to contact other saboteurs and agents.

Elizabeth Allan

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Since the war he has lectured widely about his experiences, but a friend of his told me once : "He's got the gift of giving great accounts of the bravery of others in the Resistance, but not a word about himself. . . ."

That's a common fault of the brave, but we won't let him off so lightly this Christmas.

He has plenty of stories to tell—like the time when, disguised as a Frenchman he went into a barber's shop in France during the war, *and suddenly and unaccountably forgot the French for "Shave, please!"* Luckily, the barber asked him : *"C'est pour le barbe, m'sieur?"* and Peter, smiling, nodded thankfully.

Next to the Churchills—Elizabeth Allan. She threw up a few particles of print not long back when she left the Sunday evening TV show "What's My Line?" because, as she said bluntly, she did not want to work any more on Sundays.

Oh, what a thing to do, cried the shallow-pated. Who does she think she is?

I will tell them : Elizabeth Allan is a woman with a mind of her own; one of the very few who are not afraid of having personal opinions and voicing them.

She is the daughter of a Skegness doctor, and she says, simply : "I was brought up to regard Sunday as a day of rest and relaxation." How right she is, only those who have had to work regularly on Sundays themselves can know.

This is not the first time Elizabeth has caused surprise by her refreshingly individual way of looking at things. Shortly after she was married, about twenty years ago, she was offered a big Hollywood film contract. She turned it down "because I would have to be separated from my husband," who was not then able to go to America with her.

Madness, said the jealous hearts; madness. But it was not madness, for soon enough another even better contract came her way—and this she took, because by this time husband Bill O'Bryen could go, too.

Which proves, to my way of thinking, that if you have principles and stick to them, you often get your reward—and *before* you get to Heaven !

Next to Liz Allan, a right royal guest indeed : John Gawsworth, the lyric poet, who is also (*Continued on page* 56)

By
Doctor
Baden Beatty

HUMANIZING THE HOSPITALS

ONE of the chief grievances of hospital patients is what Professor R. M. Titmuss, Professor of Social Administration at London University, recently called "the barrier of silence" between hospital staff and patients. Too often, doctors talk across the patient—even teaching students over his prostrate body—without sufficiently realizing that the "case" they are discussing is a human being full of anxieties who is hanging on every imperfectly understood pronouncement as if it were a matter of life and death.

In our British hospitals, despite present-day shortages, patients receive medical and nursing treatment equal to any the whole world over. Hospital accommodation and equipment is steadily being improved, both to provide additional treatment facilities and to increase the patients' material comfort. Where our hospitals too often fall short of the ideal is not in these technical and material matters but in attention to the needs of the sick person as an individual.

Given an adequate standard of medical care and efficient nursing, the patient's main concern is to find reassurance and to feel full confidence in the people responsible for his treatment, especially those in authority in the hospital hierarchy. The ward-sister and the houseman are probably the most reassuring figures they have access to, for they possess authority and prestige without being too remote or awe-inspiring. Unfortunately, they are usually very busy people, and may be temperamentally incapable of meeting the claims of sick people for sympathy and understanding.

AS a doctor who has, during the past five years, thrice been a hospital patient himself—first in a general hospital ward with a protracted illness eventually diagnosed as pulmonary tuberculosis, then in a sanatorium recovering, lastly in the men's surgical ward of a London teaching hospital for an operation—the writer has witnessed, and himself experienced, the frustration of being on the wrong side of "the barrier of silence."

Why do doctors in charge of hospital patients maintain such mysterious and maddening taciturnity? Partly, I think, because our scientific training makes us ultra-cautious in coming to conclusions. A patient's condition may often present many puzzling alternatives to the trained mind, and the doctor feels he will lose "face" if he tells the patient that his condition is definitely such-and-such and has to admit, a few days or weeks later, that another diagnosis has been arrived at. Nevertheless, the risk of this happening should be taken much more often than it is.

Another difficulty lies in the very nature of the trust which laymen repose in the doctor—who is, after all, only a layman with special knowledge. Human disease can be a most complex affair, and for the doctor to claim, or the layman to expect, infallibility in coping with it is utterly absurd.

If the patient is taken into the doctor's confidence, and his illness explained in simple language, also the reason for the diagnostic tests being made or the treatment being carried out, he may not have the same blind faith in his doctor but he will feel confidence in him.

THE "barrier of silence" has other causes. The doctor's training is a lengthy business, and by the time he comes to deal with his own patients he has probably spent eight years or more in a predominantly medical atmosphere. His studies leave him little time for outside social contacts, or for acquiring education in the humanities. This is probably why doctors are notorious for talking "shop."

Nurses in this country have an exaggerated respect for doctors—an attitude markedly less prevalent in the U.S.A.—to whom they feel distinctly inferior. Their position of relative restriction and inferiority is compensated for by a sense of vocation, and also by feeling that, though they cannot hope to be the doctor's equal, at least they know more about the medical mysteries than does the patient. It is thus very easy for the nurse to act as a further barrier, rather than as an interpreter, between doctor and patient.

The psychological effects of illness in hospital, with its separation from home, worries about loss of earnings and fears of future incapacity, can be very devastating. Such imponderables may adversely affect the patient's rate of recovery, even his chances of survival. Medical students and nurses are now being taught practical psychology, to enable them to give understanding attention to this aspect. The wisest attendants upon the sick have always realized that they can learn more from the most ignorant and inarticulate patient than from all the text-books ever written.

A physician with experience both as doctor and patient criticizes the "barrier of silence" in our hospitals

LUDMILLA took her grandchildren under her wing, and in the evenings they would sit round a huge log fire at her castle in Tetin and she would tell them stories of Jesus

GOOD KING WENCESLAS

Story by John Lefroy

Illustrations by Robert Hodgson

IN 1850 the British Minister at Stockholm brought home a very rare book, which he believed would interest the great hymn-writer, the Rev. J. M. Neale. It was *Piae Cantiones*, a collection of Swedish and Finnish tunes compiled in 1582 by Peter of Nyland. Neale, who was interested at the time in reviving the dying practice of carol-singing, was overjoyed. He showed it to the Rev. T. Helmore, who was equally pleased. Almost every tune was good.

Three years later the two men published *Carols For Christmastide*, twelve carols with music from the old book. The words of all but one were translations, chiefly from medieval Latin sources. The one exception was "Good King Wenceslas" Neale wrote the words of this himself and set them to one of Nyland's *cantiones*, a spring carol called "Tempus Adest Floridum" ("The time of flowers is near").

"Poor and commonplace to the last degree," "doggerel," say the eminent critics of Neale's five verses. But after ninety-nine years, in spite of strong discouragement from choir-masters, carol-book editors and musical directors, we cling to it. Christmas and "Good King Wenceslas" are, it seems, inseparable.

Inseparable, that is, in England. This carol about a King of Bohemia is unknown in Bohemia to-day. One might suspect that since Wenceslas is nearer to the German version of the original Czech name, Václav, the carol would be known in Germany. But there is no German carol of King Wenzel. It is the same all over Europe.

But what of the story contained in the carol? On December 26, it tells, the good king notices from indoors a peasant in the bitter, frosty snowy weather collecting fuel. His page informs him that the poor fellow lives "a good league" away, by "St. Agnes' Fountain." Wenceslas orders his page to bring meat, wine and pine-logs and help him to take them to the peasant. Soon after setting forth through "the bitter weather," the page finds the cold too much for him. He can "go no longer."

"Mark my footsteps good, my page,"
says the king,
Tread thou in them boldly;
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly."

Doing as he was told, the page was revived. "Heat was in the very sod which the saint had printed."

Very charming, says the Czech from Bohemia, but quite apocryphal. Václav is our patron saint and we have a big day every year to honour him.

Ah yes, we say knowingly, that day would be December 26, "On the Feast of Stephen."

On the contrary, replies our Czech, it would be September 28, the anniversary of his murder.

And the story, as the Czechs of Bohemia tell it, is as follows :

Neither history nor fiction explain the story contained in Neale's "Wenceslas" carol

IN the year 875 Borijov, reigning Prince of Bohemia, and his wife, the Princess Ludmilla, were baptized into the Christian faith by Methodius, a missionary from Constantinople. Byzantine Christianity was spreading fast, much to the anxiety of the German bishops of the Roman persuasion, and Ludmilla's saintly example greatly aided its rapid spread. Borijov built many churches, among which is the oldest Christian church in all Bohemia, at Levy Hradec, near Prague.

About ten years later the Moravians from the east overran Bohemia, deposed the son of Borijov, Spihtinev, and gave the principality to Svatopluk, his own son. Svatopluk soon quarrelled with his brother, Mojmir, and weakened his grip over Bohemia. Spihtinev seized his chance and re-established the old Bohemian dynasty. To keep the Moravians at bay, Spihtinev and his brother, Vratislav, got the help of Germany. This involved acceptance by Bohemian Christians of the Roman rather than the Byzantine Church ritual, which must have been a cruel blow to their mother, Ludmilla, devoted as she was to the memory of the great Methodius, who had converted her husband and herself.

And then the deluge from Asia, the greatest tragedy in Czech history, the invasion of the Magyars. In 907, at Bratislava, the Germans and Bohemians were decisively beaten. About the same time the Moravians were overrun, Hungary became, as it has remained, a Magyar nation. Though for more than fifty years Moravia was occupied, for some strange reason which the history books do note reveal, most of Bohemia escaped the deluge. Legend says it was

"MARK my footsteps good, my page," says the king, "tread thou in them boldly". Doing this, the page was greatly revived

the bravery and ability of Vratislav and the saintly influence of Ludmilla, his mother. But there is no knowing. What we do know is that Vratislav died in 920, and this is where your Wenceslas (or our Václav) came in.

WENCESLAS, Boleslav and Spihtinev were the three sons of Vratislav, left fatherless in early childhood. Their mother, Drahomira of Stodor, had come of the heathen tribe of the Lutices and had never been converted. She is said to have been ambitious to return all Bohemia to paganism. Whatever her designs were, she seems, in 920, to have been careless over her children, for Ludmilla managed to take them under her wing and teach them her own faith. Legend says that in the evenings of the winter of 920 and 921 round a huge log fire at her castle in Tetin she used to gather the three children to her knee and tell them stories of Jesus, simplifying the very stories Methodius had told her about thirty years before. Wenceslas, the oldest, a fine-looking, intelligent boy, was a model pupil and a most affectionate grandchild. Ludmilla loved him with all her heart and was saddened by the jealousy which the great bond between them had generated in the little Boleslav.

Boleslav's jealousy, however, was nothing compared with Drahomira's. She was intensely proud of her tribal background, intensely proud of her

ABOUT thirty armed cavaliers bore relentlessly down on the greatly inferior band on the road, making especially for Wenceslas himself

grotesque heathen gods. The gentleness, the softness of her mother-in-law's beliefs, quite apart from the love they all had for her, angered her. Her sons must be fierce fighters, strong and ruthless like the Magyars. Such qualities alone, she thought, would keep Bohemia free. Something must be done before Wenceslas, for whom she was standing as Regent, became incorrigibly soft.

Something *was* done. Ludmilla's habit, before retiring for the night, was to repair to a small chapel in her castle and spend about half an hour on her knees. She would pray for the soul of her dead husband, Borijov, and for that of her dead son, Vratislav; she would pray for the soul of Methodius, for Bohemia and her brave people, for the oppressed Moravians, for their oppressors, the fierce, oriental Magyars; she would pray for her dear Wenceslas and his brothers, for their little sister, Milada; she would pray for Drahomira, that her heart would be softened and she would believe in the only God, in the only Christ. One night, lost in the fervour of her praying, bathed in the grace of her Saviour, she felt her veil suddenly tighten round her throat, and the grace of her Saviour poured like a tidal wave over her as she died.

Something had been done. But for Drahomira nothing else went right. Her people grew to hate her, their devotion to Bohemian resistance slackened. The Germans saw their chance, and, before the Magyars saw theirs, invaded Bohemia under the leadership of their king, Henry the Fowler.

AT this time Wenceslas must have been about seventeen. At the urgent request of his people he had taken over the government and with quiet, gentle insistence had organized a nucleus of military efficiency. It went very much against the grain. Above all he loved peace. For without peace he could not go on with his favourite work, namely the building of churches throughout his principality. Henry the Fowler entered Prague with his huge German army. Only then did Wenceslas consent to give in. Henry must have been impressed by his fine character, for Bohemia escaped the usual brutalities of victorious Germans. An annual tribute agreed on, Henry returned to Saxony with his army, leaving Wenceslas to resume the government of his country where he had left it.

To use a modern phrase, he was a radical, democratic Prince. He was concerned not only with the souls of his subjects, but with their minds and bodies. The poverty of the peasants hurt him and humbled him. He found it unjust and un-Christian that he and a handful of hereditary nobles should always be well fed, well housed and well brought up. His ardour for good works soon equalled his ardour for church-building. And he was devout. For in the moments of leisure he would, like his grandmother, kneel to pray, sometimes spending a whole night thus.

Drahomira's indignation knew no bounds. In her loneliness and frustration at having forfeited her regency and lost the chance to repaganize the country, she had sought the sympathy of Boleslav, her second son. By the nature of things any younger brother to Wencelas would have to be either devoted disciple or jealous rival. Ludmilla's obvious preference, during their childhood for Wenceslas had decided for the latter, and events had embittered the relationship. Boleslav became leader of the conservative wing of the nobility and voiced their hatred of Wenceslas's radicalism and unprincely humility. Christianity, he believed, never intended princes to sink to such depths. His mother was right. Something must be done—if only for the sake of Bohemia.

SOMETHING *was* done. It had become the custom of Wenceslas, soon after his accession, to attend the anniversaries of the foundation of every Bohemian church. In September of the year 935 the anniversay of a church in Stará Boleslav, where his brother then lived, fell due. Wenceslas, who was incapable of imputing any evil motive to anyone, let alone his brother, was delighted to accept Boleslav's generous invitation to feast at his castle before the anniversary service.

On September 27, with his usual palace guard, he arrived at the castle of Stará. Boleslav received them with every appearance of genuine fraternal affection. Crowning touch of considerate hospitality came when, at the banqueting table, Wenceslas found (*Continued on page* 70)

Some facts about the research which goes into the design of children's toys may help you to make a right choice for your own little customer

SCIENCE BEHIND THE TOYS

A Tri-ang crash truck

WE who walk around the Christmas toy fairs puzzling over an appropriate gift to a youngster with a mind of its own are apt to take for granted the beautiful and expensive dolls, or the clockwork mouse and the thousands of elaborate and simple playthings which range between. That half-hour of uncertainty while we make our choice seems bad enough, but few realise what has been going on all year behind the scenes to make such a puzzling selection possible.

Ponder, first, on the countless numbers of inventors taking their brain children to the toy manufacturers, mostly to be rejected. Toys are judged by play-value standards and many that are offered to the makers just don't have it. Others are judged uneconomic to produce in quantity and many discarded as just plain crazy.

Since the war toy-making has become one of Britain's leading industries and, to-day, our toys go to eager children all over the globe. Like any other great industry, this one has grown from years of experiment combined with modern methods of production, and behind all this is a vast and very fascinating record of research into what appeals to little people.

The manufacturers of Tri-ang toys—the largest in the world—keep 10,000 toy-makers at work all the year round supplying the needs of children from Streatham to Sydney with the slick, realistic toys which the wide-awake youngster of to-day demands.

ALTHOUGH the firm is more than a century old and can therefore claim to know what children like to play with, nothing is taken for granted. There is a research laboratory in this great factory into which no outsider ever passes and a visitor who penetrated behind this Iron Curtain to Toyland might well disbelieve his eyes.

In the first place, a stout, middle-aged man would be riding a small child's tricycle into a brick wall and apparently delighting in this odd pastime. The tricycle is, of course, under test for rough usage in the hands of its subsequent owner-driver. Elsewhere a small boy will be methodically trying to pull a clockwork boat to pieces. The man near by who is pretending unconcern is actually making notes as to how long the boat will stand up to it. Someone else in the room is observing a little girl wheeling a doll's pram. Is the handle too high or too low? Does she put the shade up and down with ease? All these questions are answered by the reactions of the children themselves.

Inside the Studio an artist whose work has appeared in the Royal Academy models the little figures who will sit at the wheels of the innumerable miniature taxis, aeroplanes, harvesters, trucks, and omnibuses which are the current rage in the small-boy world. It is important, so the makers say, that the figures are convincing, so they are clothed in the familiar pullovers, scarves and caps of the real-life drivers. Artists, too, are busy modelling dolls which as near as possible duplicate flesh-and-blood people.

A young woman who ranks high in the profession of dress designing for dolls cuts out clothes which represent a real child's. Jersey and skirts are first favourites with the little-girl customers—perhaps because they come on and off easily—the tub frocks are preferred to frills and glamorised confections in silk and muslin. But as well as being "in the fashion," the Dior of Dolls' Haute Couture must design for mass production in order to apparel the 16,000 dolls which leave the factory every day.

Another well-known doll manufacturer says that the standardised sizes which have banished the life-sized doll of pre-war days is a good thing. It has been established beyond question that children react most favourably to miniature reproductions of real-life objects. Hence the fascination of tiny toys, whether they are cars, dolls' furnishings, or what you will. None the less the reproduction must be convincing in its small scale.

People who make toys their business report that red-haired dolls are bad sellers. Nobody quite has the answer to that, but the fact that small girls in Scandinavia prefer black-haired dolls, while dusky little girls in Mexico prefer the golden-haired, speaks for itself.

TOY-SELLERS insist that the packaging of toys is a vital factor in first appeal. Pictures on the box-lid must be an exact reproduction of the toy contained within, or it will meet with disapproval. An instance is given of one line of toy farmyards where the picture on the box-lid showed the farmyard set-up with all its animals, and a farmhouse in the distance which was not included with the toys. The small customer opened the box . . . inside no farmhouse . . . tears and protests. "They 've nowhere to live. There isn't a house."

When, owing to the shortage of packaging, toy soldiers were delivered in plain boxes without a picture, the sale of soldiers is reported to have slumped disastrously.

Colour is a ruling factor. One maker who was advised that children reacted to blue better than to red, dutifully switched the colour of some wooden rowboats from red to blue. The result was blue rowboats piled up on shop shelves and telegrams from the shopkeepers for stocks of red boats as before. So, you see, your task of choosing a Christmas toy *is* made easier, and all you have to remember when you make your selection from what the makers have to offer is that realism is the thing and "everything opens and shuts" is the password to a successful gift.

BY MURIEL SEGAL

Winter in the Country

WINTER in the British countryside is full of pleasant surprises to those who can pull themselves away from the fireside and launch out amidst the fields and lanes and hedgerows. There is unlimited beauty in winter-time, not the lush greenery of the leafy summer but wilder scenes of bare branches against the sky, of the warm russet tones which often linger on from the autumn. There are the fleeting beauties of hoar-frost, if you can catch them, and the colourful, spectacular beauty of sunshine on freshly-fallen snow. The main thing about going out in winter-time, whether it be walking or driving, is to be warmly and comfortably clad. Only then can you appreciate fully all that is around you.

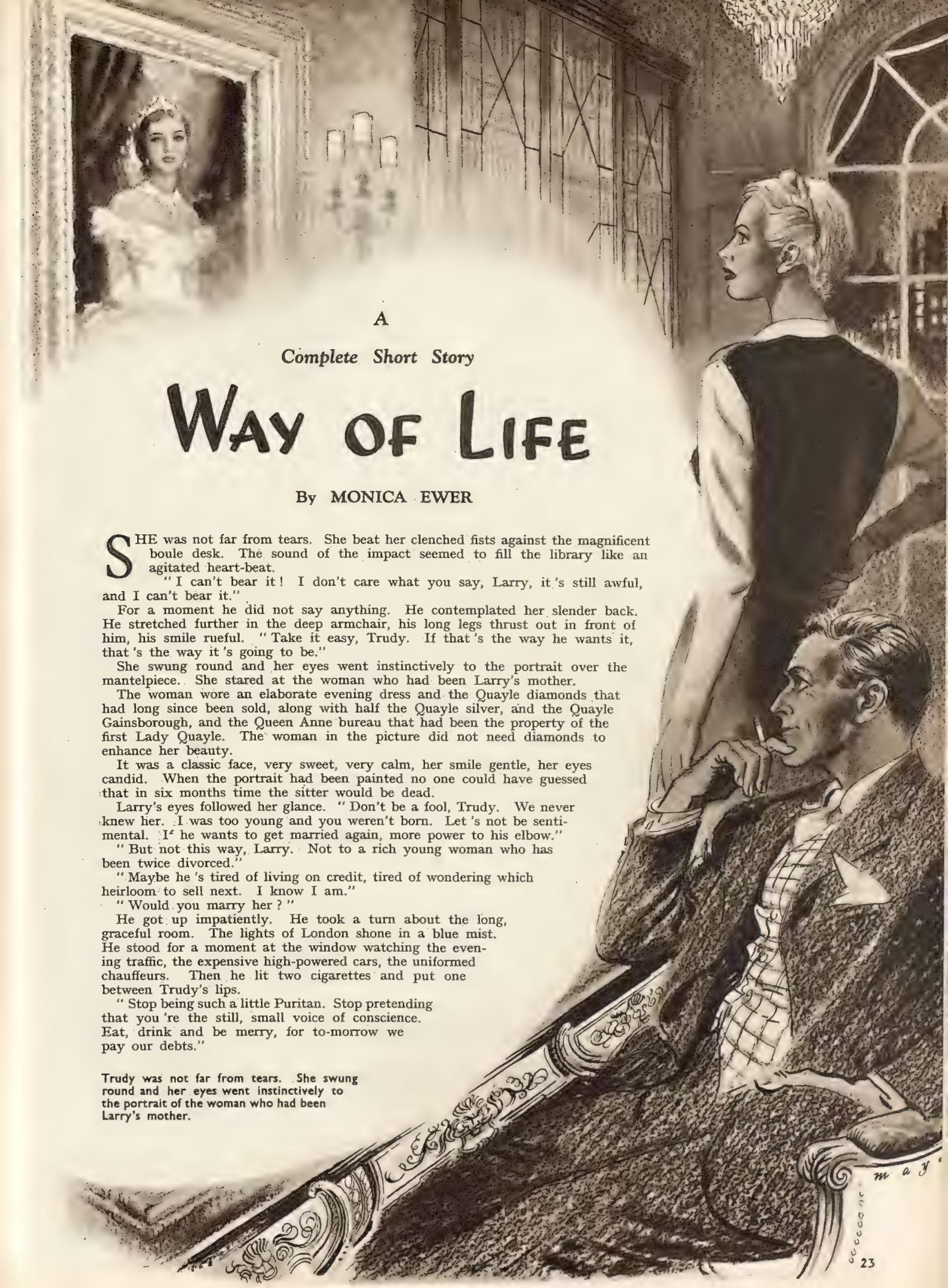
I am not one of those hardy out-door types who advocate long walks even in downpours of rain. But anything less than this can be faced with equanimity and with infinite and unexpected pleasures in the countryside. I have had some wonderful days in Scotland in the winter, and in the Lake District as well, when cold, blustering winds brought alternate snow flurries and bursts of dazzling, warm sunshine, when all the sky was a turmoil of billowing white and grey clouds, and sea or lake were whipped up into white caps. How your face glows after a day in the open in that sort of weather, and how good it feels just to be alive.

The Lake District is magnificent in winter-time, perhaps even more so than in the leafy season. If you make a tour there in the late winter, when perhaps the very first stirrings of spring are discernible, such (*Continued on page* 58)

BY

J. ALLAN CASH.

Top: Lake Ullswater, taken from Glen Coyne Park, looking towards Patterdale. **Above:** A snowy footpath near Boxhill. **Left:** Frost adds a magic charm to the countryside near Dedham, Essex.



A

Complete Short Story

WAY OF LIFE

By MONICA EWER

SHE was not far from tears. She beat her clenched fists against the magnificent boule desk. The sound of the impact seemed to fill the library like an agitated heart-beat.

"I can't bear it! I don't care what you say, Larry, it 's still awful, and I can't bear it."

For a moment he did not say anything. He contemplated her slender back. He stretched further in the deep armchair, his long legs thrust out in front of him, his smile rueful. "Take it easy, Trudy. If that 's the way he wants it, that 's the way it 's going to be."

She swung round and her eyes went instinctively to the portrait over the mantelpiece. She stared at the woman who had been Larry's mother.

The woman wore an elaborate evening dress and the Quayle diamonds that had long since been sold, along with half the Quayle silver, and the Quayle Gainsborough, and the Queen Anne bureau that had been the property of the first Lady Quayle. The woman in the picture did not need diamonds to enhance her beauty.

It was a classic face, very sweet, very calm, her smile gentle, her eyes candid. When the portrait had been painted no one could have guessed that in six months time the sitter would be dead.

Larry's eyes followed her glance. "Don't be a fool, Trudy. We never knew her. I was too young and you weren't born. Let 's not be sentimental. If he wants to get married again, more power to his elbow."

"But not this way, Larry. Not to a rich young woman who has been twice divorced."

"Maybe he 's tired of living on credit, tired of wondering which heirloom to sell next. I know I am."

"Would you marry her?"

He got up impatiently. He took a turn about the long, graceful room. The lights of London shone in a blue mist. He stood for a moment at the window watching the evening traffic, the expensive high-powered cars, the uniformed chauffeurs. Then he lit two cigarettes and put one between Trudy's lips.

"Stop being such a little Puritan. Stop pretending that you 're the still, small voice of conscience. Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we pay our debts."

Trudy was not far from tears. She swung round and her eyes went instinctively to the portrait of the woman who had been Larry's mother.

They believed that the purpose of life was to have a good time. They did not believe in economy, worry or work.

Illustrations by Mays

She moved her head restlessly, she flung her words at him as if they were a hail of bullets. "I wouldn't care if the money were needed for something important—but just to maintain this!"

"What matters is entirely subjective. This—as you call it—happens to matter to him."

"This nonsense!" she retorted indignantly. "This doing what he's always done! This convention that starts the year at Mürren and ends it at Cairo, taking in Henley, Ascot and the Highlands on the way! You'd think the war would have killed such triviality."

"It's a way of life, Trudy. It's the way he likes, his form of art, his self-expression. Don't be so righteous, so narrow-minded; don't think there's no pleasure to a thing because it doesn't happen to appeal to you."

"But we could have gone on the way we are," she said miserably.

"I don't think so. Even heirlooms aren't inexhaustible. There might come a time when we'd be uncomfortable."

"Oh, Larry!" She loved him and hated him all in the drawing of a breath. "You sound so effete!"

"Effete?" His lean, dark face was in shadow. She could not read his thoughts. "Maybe I am. It never troubles me. I have a good time."

And yet he wasn't effete. His body was hard, his mind was quick, his enjoyment was genuine. He would ride a horse at or over anything. Both he and his father had served with distinction in the war. To get in took a bit of wangling on Sir Edward's part, but that was in the tradition. Quayles wouldn't go to work, but they would go to war.

"Oh, Larry, why can't you be like anyone else, with an ordinary sense of values? If the debts get you down, why don't you try for a job?"

WHEN she had first met him he had seemed all set to be an engineer. He had taken his degree. He sounded enormously enthusiastic. And then it had all come to nothing. In those days she hadn't known him well enough to ask what had happened and he had never reopened the subject. She had been puzzled at the time but in two years she had come to accept many things that had seemed strange at first.

"Work? If I worked I might be able to support us in a villa in, say, Camberwell—with kippers for supper—and a lodger in the spare room. That isn't the way he would enjoy life."

He was silent for a moment, his thin lips pressed together, so that he looked older than his age, and he was no longer smiling. "We care about him, Trudy. It's up to us to see that he has whatever he wants to make him happy."

"Of course we care about him," she said, as if it had been questioned. She adored him. Sir Edward was rare. You seldom met such people. He was chivalrous, exquisite, and sometimes, she thought, sweetly silly.

"When my father died your father did everything for me. He invented a job for me here, he loved me as if I were really his daughter, and he was always so— (*Continued on page 73*)

Skeat, highly offended, stepped forward, picked up the bowl and disappeared through the door leading to the servants' quarters.

LARRY put a hand under her arm and with the other he pushed a glass between her fingers. Lady Quayle's remark was as pointed as if she had been shown the door

"The Adoration Of The Kings" *Moritz Von Schnindt*
Stadtisches Museum, Wuppertal

You Should Believe In Christmas

By

Pamela Fry

IT is rather fashionable to be cynical about Christmas. Knee-deep in Christmas preparations, we assure everyone with a pained smile that we "just do it for the children." We are disenchanted. We are tired of being reminded that there are only seventeen—sixteen—fifteen more shopping days; we are bored by the seedy-looking Santas who lurk at every corner; by the extravagant demands of our children. The true Christmas spirit no longer burns with a pure, gem-like flame.

And unfortunately the Christmas spirit is one thing that has not yet been successfully packaged and sold across the counter. What, precisely, is it, anyway? What is it that impels even the most sophisticated citizens to the exchange of artistically neutral cards, the adorning of their houses with the chilly silver cousin of the traditional Christmas tree; that drives even the most harassed and penny-pinching household to the extravagance of crackers and a bottle of wine for Christmas dinner. Is it habit, convention, religious convictions, sentimental allegiance to childhood memories—or the frank desire for a bit of extra fun?

The true Christmas spirit, maturing over the centuries into a rich and potent brew, is compounded of all these things. Our need for ritual, for the magical transformation of the commonplace into the splendour of the carnival—for the revelation which can explain life's larger significance.

Of all holidays, Christmas is the most beautiful and also the most human, which is perhaps the main reason why it has continued to have reality and meaning for every age and every society—why it has even survived the impact of the fast-moving modern world.

WHAT is Christmas? Primarily, a religious holiday, celebrating the birth of Christ. It is also known as Noël, Calendas, Weihnacht and Yule. The first recorded Christmas celebration took place in Rome, somewhere between the years 336 and 354.

It is the custom at this season to decorate our houses with holly and misletoe, to set up a Christmas tree, to exchange gifts and cards and to indulge in a general round of jollities, including Christmas dinner. A very important component is the appearance of Santa Claus, also known as Father Christmas, St. Nick, Christkind or Knecht Ruprecht; and appearing variously as a bishop, a white-robed child or an apparition clad in skins and straws, as well as the familiar bearded old gentleman in red.

But the real origins of Christmas stretch far beyond our own childhood and that of our ancestors to the childhood of civilization.

Christmas, as we know it, emerged largely as the result of a violent conflict between the early church and its heathen rivals. Pagan festivals were then the vogue, celebrated for a dual reason : to appease the right gods at the right time; to enjoy oneself. Christianity was less utilitarian, being more concerned with the state of man's soul than the state of his crops.

Now one of the most important pagan rituals was the celebration of the winter solstice on December 25—the day on which the power of the sun began to increase. Its return was heralded with special ceremony. In Egypt and Syria, for example, people went into inner shrines, reappearing at midnight and crying : "The Virgin has brought forth ! The light is waxing !" And the image of a child was displayed to prove the existence of the new sun.

THE Eastern Christians, ignoring this festival, set the day of Christ's nativity on January 6. Western Christians did nothing until the fourth century, when they suddenly announced December 25 as the true birthday of the Saviour. There is evidence to indicate that this was an attempt to wipe out the habit of sun-worship in which even Christians still indulged.

The pagan Roman feasts of Saturnalia and Kalends were an even more serious problem because they involved so much public merrymaking and were therefore very popular. Saturnalia began on (*Continued on page 64*)

Gilbert in the uniform of Deputy Sheriff of the County as he was and (*right*) as he is portrayed in the film *Mr. Gilbert And Mr. Sullivan* by Robert Morley, as he is about to receive his knighthood from Edward VII

THREE MEN AND MUSIC

By

By LESLIE BAILY

Author of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Book" and joint-scriptwriter with Sidney Gilliat of the new film "Mr. Gilbert And Mr. Sullivan"

THERE were three Englishmen in the reign of Victoria who were red-hot revolutionaries. They worked in London at the same time as Karl Marx but to a very different end. Their purpose was not to make people class-conscious, but to make them fun-conscious. It was not to make them rise and fight, but to make them laugh and sing. Their mission was not to denounce the evils of Society, but to poke fun at its foibles. England's "dark satanic mills" were, to them, the dark satanic theatres of Victorian London. The barriers they attacked therein were not those of classes but those of morality and manners, for they sought to make the musical theatre a place where respectable people would go, which was a daring aspiration in the seventies.

The names of these rebels were Gilbert, Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte.

Full credit has rarely been given to the third of these names. The partnership was essentially a triangular one, each side of the triangle different, yet each holding the other two together. When, after many successful years, they quarrelled, the whole triangle collapsed in confusion.

Let us consider these men in turn, and the revolution they wrought.

Sir William Schwenck Gilbert, who wrote the words of the series of comic operas which was the main product of their revolution, has often been described as a bad-tempered man—unfairly, I think, because his occasional bad temper was more than balanced by his fundamental good humour. Here, for example, among many documents which have come my way during research into the subject, is Gilbert's reply to a request for a donation to an orchestral charity; it typifies the Gilbert whose bark was worse than his bite :

> "I hate the orchestra—they take up a lot of paying stalls—they are the most cantankerous and independent set in the theatre, and they play so loud that my words can't be heard. Moreover, like many other high-souled and independent specimens of nature's nobility, they are the first to come begging cap in hand when they are in difficulties. Having thus blown off steam, I have much pleasure in sending five guineas for the fund."

HE had much pleasure. This was genuine—as genuine as the blowing off of steam. Insincerity had no place in Gilbert's character. He had a pungent command of words, and from him we obtain a description of the English musical theatre eighty years ago :

"When Sullivan and I began to collaborate English comic opera had practically ceased to exist. Such muscial entertainments as held the stage were adaptations of the crapulous plots of the operas of Offenbach, Audran, and Lecoq. The plots had generally been bowdlerized out of intelligibility, and when they had not been subjected to this treatment they were frankly improper; whereas the ladies' dresses suggested that the management had gone on the principle of doing a little and doing it well. We set out with the determination to prove that these elements were not essential to the success of humorous opera."

Gilbert belonged to the upper middle class, and he knew well that a musical show was hardly the sort of thing that respectable people would go to, or reputable writers and composers would work for. Theatres were squalid, the acting inept, the singing worse. Discipline was unknown as actors gagged blithely through lines that the poor author

A remarkable resemblance is achieved in the film between the leading characters and their counterparts. The real Sullivan (*below*) and Maurice Evans in the part in a scene with Muriel Aked as Queen Victoria

could hardly recognize, as Gilbert learned when an apprentice hack-writer of pantomimes.

Into this tawdry world came, strangely enough, two men who were in the best sense of the word gentlemen, and in the most English sense of the word, humorists : for Sullivan was a humorist in music if ever there was one. But they were not drawn irresistibly together. It needed a third force to bring about the great partnership.

It needed a man of unusual courage and imagination to conceive that out of the wreck and rubbish of theatrical light entertainment something of permanent value could be created : the Savoy Operas.

Richard D'Oyly Carte, a young theatre manager and impresario, had this dream. It called out exceptional qualities in him. First, what the red-bearded theatre critic Bernard Shaw praised as "Carte's artistic good breeding." Nothing but the best in *quality* would ever do for Carte—in singers, in costumes and scenery, in the design of the wonderful new Savoy Theatre which he built and equipped with electric light, the first theatre in the country to have it.

Carte was always a pioneer, his taste was exquisite, his business judgment shrewd. His greatest piece of pioneering (which reveals alike this shrewdness and this artistic sensibility) was in bringing Gilbert and Sullivan together. When other managers were content with bowdlerized Offenbach, Carte dreamed of creating a school of English light opera and he foresaw that Gilbert's mordant wit could be matched by Sullivan's sparkling tunes, and Sullivan's tendency to sentimentality could find its antidote in Gilbert's acidity.

The choice of Sullivan to write the music was spectacular. True, he was no stranger to the theatre, having already composed two or three merry little pieces before he met Gilbert, but (*Continued on page 70*)

Richard D'Oyly Carte (*above*) the third force in the great triangle of entertainment, dreamed of a new home for opera in London and built it. It was a costly failure as such and is now familiar as the Palace Theatre, London. Peter Finch as D'Oyly Carte and Eileen Herlie as his wife, with the model of his theatre

He embarked on a career most suited to his gifts and ambitions. He found it both enjoyable and quite easy

A Room for Christmas

by Barbara Cartland

"IT'S no use arguing, Mr. Haslett, my Jim's coming on leave for Christmas, and the arrangement was when he comes you goes! Now was it or wasn't it?"

"Yes, yes it was, Mrs. Bacon," Henry Haslett agreed hastily. His landlady could be truculent if crossed.

He looked round his bed-sitting-room despondently. Bleak and empty though it was of everything but the bare necessities of life, he had grown fond of it. He was only to be exiled for three or four days, but being Christmas made it not only seem worse than at any other time—it was worse.

To begin with, his mother, widow of a minor Post Office official, would have what little room there was in her small boarding-house in Maida Vale filled with her daughters and grandchildren. Secondly, being Christmas, there would be few funerals to occupy his time and interest.

Henry Haslett had for the last twenty years been an inveterate and persistent funeral-goer. After failing to keep any employment for more than a few months he had embarked on a career most suited to his gifts and ambitions.

From *The Times* newspaper Henry extracted every morning information regarding the deaths of distinguished statesmen, public servants and Servicemen. His subsequent actions became a ritual.

First, Henry wrote a letter of condolence to the bereaved widow. Literature had lost a great asset in Henry Haslett, for invariably the recipient wept at the moving beauty of this epistle. Then he attended the funeral or memorial service.

"A relation, sir?" an usher would ask.

"Only a very old friend," was Henry's reply in a sad, deprecating voice, and would allow himself to be shown into a prominent pew.

Afterwards he would watch the social columns closely for news of the widow's return to London, or if there was no mention of her, he would, after a decent interval, telephone the house under an assumed name for news of her movements.

When he was fairly certain of finding her at home he called—sympathetic understanding and a few charming little anecdotes of the "late-lamented" made it inevitable that such an interview was but the first of many delightful meetings, and of invitations to luncheon and dinner.

If by any chance, on the first occasion the lady was not at home, Henry left his card and followed it by a short note asking if she could spare a moment of her valuable time to talk of "one whom we both loved and miss constantly." He seldom had a refusal.

It was extraordinary how his acquaintances increased year by year. Men, too, grew used to meeting him in churches and cemeteries.

"Hallo, Haslett. How are you? Haven't seen you since poor old Strathcarra's funeral. Well, another of the old brigade's gone west. We'll never see his like again. Awful crowd here! Come and have luncheon with me when we can get away. You can? Good! Got a car? No? Then we'll cadge a lift from the General. He'll be going back to the Club for a certainty."

IT was all quite easy and most enjoyable. Henry had come a long way since he had been batman during his Service years to the Colonel of the Regiment. But what he had learnt then stood him in good stead. He knew how gentlemen behaved, how they dressed, how they ate and how they talked.

It was his admiration for the Colonel which had made him despise his own contemporaries and look down on his relatives.

The latter disliked his stuck-up, superior airs, and never lost an opportunity of telling him just what they thought of him.

Only his mother, for some unknown reason, was proud of him. She gave Henry a small allowance from her pension, and a bit extra whenever she could afford it.

She was never tired of hearing of the smart people Henry met at his funerals and whenever he had the time, or wanted another pound or so, he went to Maida Vale. His visits were arranged so that he could be sure of finding her alone.

The idea of Christmas cooped with his sisters, their husbands and children was too repugnant to be contemplated. But what else was he to do?

His requirements were not cheap; the morning coat, waistcoat and trousers from a first-class tailor took him years to pay off; his shirts often wanted replacing, and his top hat had come from the best hatters in St. James's Street.

There was also the expense of visiting cards, good and costly writing paper stamped with his address and a crest—chosen from the crest book at random.

Henry had decided at the outset that his address must be in Mayfair. No one had ever seen the small, dingy bed-sitting-room he occupied all the year round, except when his landlady's son came home on leave, but he could truthfully say, "It was just off Grosvenor Square."

The arrangement with Mrs. Bacon had worked splendidly until now. It was infuriating to think that Jim should be coming on leave just when Henry couldn't go home, and had no money to take other accommodation.

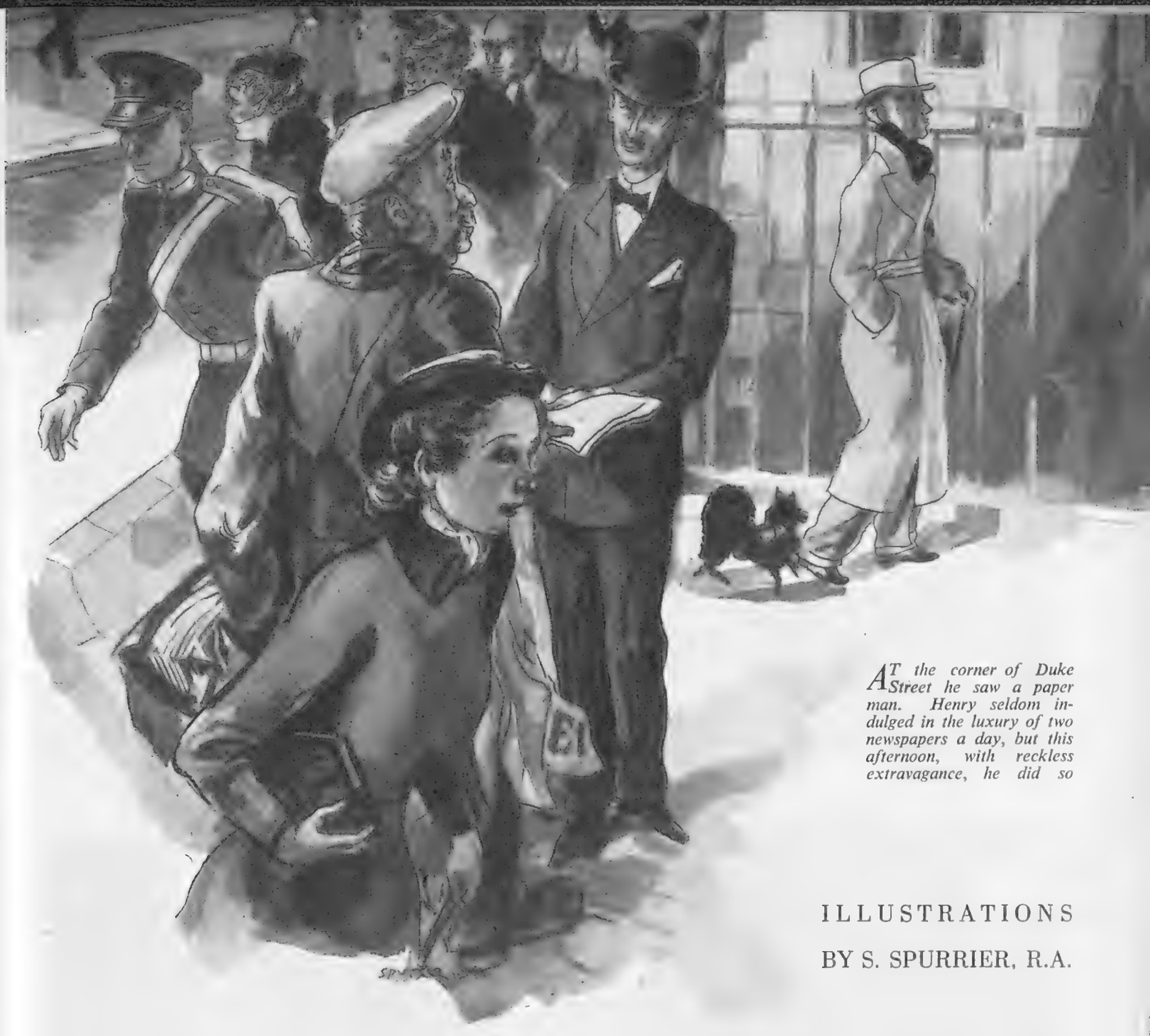
It was no use asking his mother. He had touched her for "a loan" only last week, after Admiral Langham had met him at Lord Burrell's funeral and asked him down to the country for luncheon on Sunday.

Henry had to buy a tweed suit for the occasion, and his mother had lent him the money to pay for it, with the proviso that it should last him until Easter because she "couldn't go on forking out at this rate."

What was he to do? Henry took a walk round Grosvenor Square to clear his head.

This was one of his afternoons off, so he wore a short coat with his striped trousers, and a bowler hat. Habit made him chose a black tie, although it is doubtful if, as he was invariably in mourning for someone, he possessed a tie of any other colour.

Walking briskly in the pale, December sunshine, a well-rolled umbrella in his hand, Henry looked both public school and well-bred. He was a small, dapper, little man, with a well-kept moustache and an air of sombre melancholy. Grey hair at the



AT the corner of Duke Street he saw a paper man. Henry seldom indulged in the luxury of two newspapers a day, but this afternoon, with reckless extravagance, he did so

ILLUSTRATIONS

BY S. SPURRIER, R.A.

temples had given him a more distinguished air as he grew older.

What was he to do? Grosvenor Square filled with expensive American cars provided no answer to the problem.

Then, at the corner of Duke Street he saw a paper man. Henry seldom indulged in the luxury of two newspapers a day, but this afternoon, with an air of reckless extravagance, he did so.

ON the first page, under the news of the United Nations and a picture of Prince Charles, was an item of absorbing interest to Henry. The Marquis of Melchester was dead.

On page four there were several paragraphs about the Marquis. He had recently returned from a visit to Egypt. It was, in fact, a chill caught on the homeward journey which was responsible for his death.

He was sixty-two, unmarried, and lived at Melchester Hall, Bedfordshire, where his sister, Lady Victoria Bungle, also unmarried, acted as hostess for him. He had no brother and the title went to a distant cousin believed to be in America.

The Marquis of Melchester! Henry thought hard. He had seen the Marquis once at Sir John Dewlish's memorial service five years ago. He remembered him as a tall, thin man of military appearance, who swore at someone who trod on his foot.

Seven days to Christmas? The funeral would be on Friday or Saturday. Henry took a deep breath. He had made up his mind to undertake the most daring adventure and greatest risk of his whole career.

LADY VICTORIA BUNGLE picked up a letter from the pile in front of her.

"Aunt Edith's writing is completely illegible," she remarked to her cousin and companion, Miss Freda Spending, who was knitting some obscure garment by the fire.

"Lady Edith must be over eighty," Miss Spending said gently.

"I suppose she must, but as I can't read what she says it is difficult to answer what are quite obviously a number of questions," Lady Victoria replied. "I expect, however, all she wants to know is what poor Arthur left, and to whom."

"Will you tell her?" Miss Spending enquired.

"Certainly not!" Lady Victoria answered promptly. "The Will will be published in due course and I don't want every relative we've ever had sponging on me until it's absolutely unavoidable."

Miss Spending flushed, and the tip of her nose grew pink.

"I think, Victoria, you take a rather jaundiced view of human nature. Everyone is not out to get something out of you, as you appear to think."

"Most of my relatives are," Lady Victoria replied grimly.

She rose as she spoke and crossed to the fireplace to hold out her thin, blue-veined hands to the fire. She was an angular woman with pointed features and eyes which curiously belied her sharp tongue.

All her life Lady Victoria had wanted friends and affection, all her life she had repulsed everyone she met by her brusque and

manner and bitter cynicism. It was, though few knew it, both her defence and her armour against what she most dreaded—pity.

She was painfully aware of her unattractiveness; she was acutely self-conscious of her plain appearance, and only by being aggressive could she be sure that no one was sorry for her.

"You are cold, Victoria," Miss Spending said. "Why not come for a walk while the sun is out?"

"I've all these letters to finish," Lady Victoria replied, "and the Christmas presents for the staff to label."

"I'll help you," Miss Spending offered. "Dear me, I can't realize that it's Christmas Day to-morrow. We shall miss Arthur."

Lady Victoria did not answer. She walked back to her writing desk and had started another letter when the door opened.

A pontifical butler crossed the room with a telegram on a silver salver. He offered it to Lady Victoria with a bow.

"The boy is waiting for an answer, m'lady."

Lady Victoria opened the orange envelope. She took out the telegram, read it through carefully and then stared at it in bewilderment.

"Who can this be from? Henry Haslett! I've never heard of him!"

"Isn't that the Lendrum family name?" Miss Spending asked.

"No—Hasteth—this is Haslett—and it's completely incomprehensible—there must be some mistake."

"What does it say?" Miss Spending asked curiously.

Lady Victoria cleared her throat.

"The telegram says," she answered. "'*Arriving sometime this afternoon don't meet will find own way looking forward enormously Christmas we planned. Henry Haslett*'."

"Henry Haslett! I'm sure that name has a familiar ring!" exclaimed Miss Spending.

"Not to me," Lady Victoria retorted. "Arriving here . . . 'looking forward Christmas we planned.' There must be a mistake."

"The wire is addressed to you?" enquired Miss Spending.

"No, of course no, to Arthur."

"Then it must be one one of dear Arthur's friends," Miss Spending said, with the air of a Sherlock Holmes.

"That is obvious, Freda, but if Arthur had asked someone to stay for Christmas he would have told me."

"He might have forgotten to mention it," Miss Spending ventured nervously. "After all, he was ill when he arrived home."

"So he was. Yes, it may have slipped his memory. Well, there's nothing we can do about it but send Mr. Haslett away. Keep the taxi, or whatever the gentleman arrives in, Burton. It must take him to the train, or back where he has come from."

"Very good, m'lady."

"I wonder what he is like?" Miss Spending remarked after Burton had left the room. Lady Victoria did not raise her head from her letter.

"Who? Henry Haslett? An Army man, I expect, most of Arthur's friends were military bores."

CRUSHED, Miss Spending ventured no more speculation and they sat without speaking until about twenty minutes later the door was opened by Burton.

"Mr. Henry Haslett, m'lady," he announced.

Henry came slowly into the room. He looked quiet and not undistinguished in his well-cut tweeds. He glanced from one lady to the other, then as Lady Victoria advanced towards him, held out his hand with a smile.

"Lady Victoria Bungle? I am so glad to meet you. Arthur told me so much about you that I feel already we are old friends."

Without waiting for an introduction he shook hands with Miss Spending, then, still smiling genially, said:

"I can't tell you how excited I am to be here. It's exactly as Arthur described it to me. Where is he, by the way? I hope he got my telegram!"

There was a painful silence. Then Lady Victoria recovered her voice.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Haslett, I have bad news for you."

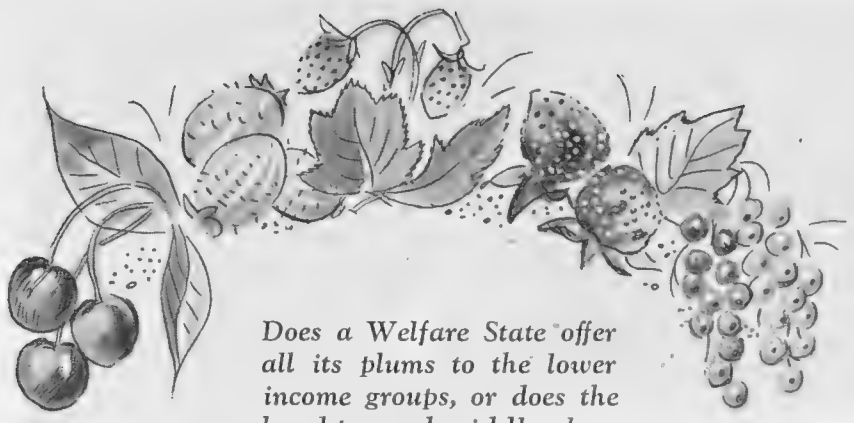
"Bad news?"

"My brother Arthur died last Tuesday morning. He was buried on Saturday."

"Arthur dead!"

There was no mistaking the shock this was to Henry. He stared at Lady Victoria as if he could (*Continued on page 76*)

"*I WONDER if you know what English tea means to those of us who have been forced to spend long years abroad?*" *Henry said to Lady Victoria*



Does a Welfare State offer all its plums to the lower income groups, or does the hard-pressed middle class get its share?

IT AM TODAY

By
Lydia Horton

WE have all become familiar with the term "The Welfare State," but many of us feel that the "Welfare" is planned for some section of the community other than our own. It seems to us that we do the paying and someone else gets the benefits. How true is this? What sort of a return are we really getting for our high rates and taxes?

Take a glance at taxation first. Out of every £1 that the Government is collecting from us this year (1952/3) in taxes, direct and indirect, it is spending 9s. 2d. on defence and the National Debt, 6s. 6d. on social services and food subsidies, 2s. 2d. on a variety of things such as 4d. for agriculture and 1d. for broadcasting and is putting aside 2s. 2d. as a surplus to help finance investment and avoid inflation.

This is not the place to discuss whether we are getting our money's worth for the first and last of these expenditures. Nor is there space to deal with all the two-and-twopenny items. But let us look at the social services. What are we getting there?

There are so many pieces in the jig-saw that it is almost impossible to see the whole picture, but here are some of the less obvious benefits.

First, education. If we are paying for our children to go to private schools, we are apt to think we are getting nothing from the Government's expenditure on education other than, perhaps, the free milk that children in any and every school can have. But look ahead a little. To-day, the universities in Great Britain, though self-governing, are drawing nearly two-thirds of their income from the Exchequer (i.e. from our taxes) and another five per cent from local education authorities (i.e. from our rates). Without such aid it would be a bad lookout indeed for university education.

Over the last five years there has been a great increase in the number of scholarships and awards for university students. Last year (1951) the Ministry of Education offered 1,850 scholarships for university honours degrees, and 120 technical scholarships, besides supplementing with money grants open scholarships where necessary. In the same period the local education authorities awarded over 10,000 university scholarships with maintenance grants.

THEN there is what is called by the dreary title of "Further Education" which means an amazing variety of courses, mostly in the evenings but some full-time, for all those who have left school. Subjects range from political economy to how to trim a hat. The courses are given in technical, commercial and art colleges, in evening institutes and so on. All are aided by State grants.

Here is a widely different example of how easy it is not to see the whole picture. The other day I was grumbling to a doctor friend about the flat taste of our tap water, which I blamed on the chlorination that it now undergoes. "You may be right," he said, "but do you realize that since chlorination was made compulsory, *typhoid has completely disappeared?*"

Then think how the State, whether it is realized or not, takes a part in any shopping expedition. I am not referring to the vexed question of food subsidies and purchase tax, of which we are all aware. But there are the tradesman's scales, on which the State keeps a watchful eye, with sharp penalties for false weights. Sharp penalties, too, for the adulteration of food or drugs. And, since the war, a notable new protection for the shopper—the labelling order. No longer is it feasible for a food product containing the merest trace of a vitamin to call itself "vitaminized." The exact proportion of each drug or vitamin, etc., must be stated on the label of every medicine or food product which claims medicinal properties.

Another service still in its infancy, but which we must surely all welcome, is the setting up of standards for all manner of goods by the British Standards Institution which is subsidized by the State. Standards for such widely different articles as bedding and pressure cookers have recently been worked out by them in consultation with trade experts and as time goes on it is hoped that the "kite" stamp, the sign that an article has been made in conformity with the Institution's standards, will be as familiar to us as the old utility sign.

THERE is another useful activity of the British Standards Institution—the working out of a national size code for clothing based on genuine body sizes and with fitting numbers that will be a real guide to the customer. Parallel with this, the Government sponsored Clothing Industry Development Council is undertaking a nation-wide survey of women's measurements (men's and children's may come later). The results will be carefully related to the British Standards Institution's sizing system. The final findings should make shopping for clothes far easier than it is to-day, when if, say, the bust of a dress fits you, the length (*Continued on page* 56)

REDINGTON'S
NEW & ORIGINAL STAGE FRONT OF THE
BRITTANNIA THEATRE.
To be used Flat or Built
PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY J REDINGTON AT HIS THEATRICAL
PRINT WAREHOUSE 208 HORTON
OLD TOWN

Stage front for the toy theatre of 1830

PENNY PLAIN—

PICTURE the drawing-room of a comfortably-off, middle-class family just before Victoria ascended the throne: cosy, gas-lit, charmingly furnished in the opulent manner of the day. It is Christmas, and that magic period between tea and the children's bedtime when indoor games are brought out and young cheeks that have been nipped by a day spent in the open air become rosy with chatter and excitement. On the table is a Toy Theatre, new, brightly coloured, the focus of all eyes.

This pastime was the delight of every British child of the Georgian and Victorian eras and it was said then that in England we possessed the best of Toy Theatres and the worst of grown-up ones. The stage of those days, although considered by many to be dramatically barren, remained theatrically exciting, presenting for the most part full-blooded melodramas and slapstick Harlequinades. This broad style, reflected in the juvenile drama, made it the enchanting thing it was, a bright, riotous entertainment that caught and held the children's imagination.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century shop windows displayed highly coloured prints of celebrated actors in rôles which they were playing on the London stage. From these sprang sets of prints known to all as "Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured," and in time almost all the popular plays of the day were issued in special sheets of scenery and characters to be cut out and mounted on cardboard. The figures were placed in small tin slides and made to perform inside the quaint proscenium of a model theatre to the piping voices of young children reading from the specially prepared scripts of such plays as "The Silver Palace," "The Battle Of Waterloo," "Three-fingered Jack," and "My Poll And My Partner Joe."

THE young lavished their pocket-money on their hobby, and as soon as they had a few coppers would rush to one of the many printsellers, then crammed with sheet upon delicious sheet which could be bought plain and painted at home, or—and this was considered heresy by the more industrious—purchased already glowing with colour, applied by hand and mixed from only four basic tints. Combined these could produce a crimson lake, a purple or a "savoury greenness" quite perfect in its garish splendour.

The purchaser, hurrying home, would arm himself with paste, paint and scissors and begin eagerly the fascinating task of preparing his production. Here was the real pith of the game—to peter off, alas, into what Robert Louis Stevenson described as "the long-drawn disenchantment of an actual performance." Perhaps it *was* monotonous to see eternally gliding yet quite static characters, whose only indication of speech was a furious (*Continued on page* 68)

Design for the film *Hamlet* by Roger Furse adapted by Puffin Books for the Toy Theatre

Side wings and extras for "Battle Of Waterloo," 1842

TUPPENCE COLOURED

By JOHN GOODWIN

Contemporary Toy Theatre set by Doris Zinkeisen

Puffin Book reproduction of 1836. Set and characters in the Harlequinade

the FEAST and AFTER

By JANET DARBY

GATHER around, sisters in the craft, for the time has come for us to consider with appropriate reverence the masterpiece which shall adorn our Christmas table. And masterpiece it must be, I say firmly: for if on this day of all days we may not pander to our noble appetites, when then?

First, then, let us decide on the bird. Turkey? There's a great deal to be said for it, especially if you have a large party. And tradition, of course, is all for it. Against that choice, however, you must weigh the facts that modern kitchenettes aren't equipped to cope with mammoth birds, and that kitchen equipment, from the stove downwards, is usually on the small side, too. Secondly, turkeys are large-framed birds, so that a small turkey, weighing about five or six pounds, will have far too much bone to justify its price. Thirdly, if your large party is only a husband who takes size 17½ in collars you are going to have to dress up the remains of turkey for days and days. Bluntly, you are going to be *sick* of turkey before you are through.

If, however, you are determined to have *turkey* you will look for a short-spurred, black-legged bird with pliable feet and bright, full eyes. You will stuff it, I expect, with a chestnut stuffing at one end and a savoury sausage stuffing at the other. And you will roast with it little sausage forcemeat balls. Cranberry sauce is a good accompaniment, made as follows: Boil half-pound of cranberries in a gill of water for five minutes, rub through a sieve, and reheat the purée, adding one small teacupful of sugar. Add a pinch of ground cinnamon to a heaped teaspoonful of cornflour, mix to a thin paste with two tablespoonfuls of cold water, then pour the hot purée on to it while stirring. Return to the pan, and boil, stirring, for five minutes.

The goose now presents itself for our consideration. An excellent bird, this, with a plump, firm breast, and pliable yellow bill and feet. You'll look for a nice pliable breastbone, too. For this, sage and onion stuffing is best, and a really smooth apple sauce. But be sure to prick the skin well before cooking your goose, so that some of the fat can run away, or you may find that the aftermath of the feast will be indigestion. Nothing spoils pleasant memories like a bad attack of the gripes.

If *duck* is to be your choice, this, too, is good with sage and onion stuffing and a sharp sauce to accompany it. Gooseberry sauce, apple sauce, or, if you would like to be more original, try an orange sauce made as follows:

Boil the duck giblets with a small sliced onion, seasoning, but no herbs. Just cover with water, and cook gently for an hour, so that the liquid just simmers. Strain the stock thus obtained. Then melt half an ounce of butter, stir in half an ounce of flour or cornflour until it bubbles; gradually add half a pint of the stock, stirring. Add grated rind of an orange, the juice of two oranges, and salt, tasting to see that it is exactly right. Take off the heat, allow to cool slightly, then beat in the yolk of an egg. Serve immediately.

Last on the list for consideration is the *chicken*, a young plump bird, short-legged and with a yielding breastbone when pressed. A versatile bird, too. Brush it all over with olive-oil, stuff it with a chestnut stuffing, and serve it with chipolata sausages which have been roasted alongside the chicken (but don't put the sausages in the pan until half an hour before serving!). With a slice of freshly boiled ham accompanying it, what could be nicer? Or more traditional, for that matter. If you want to be more adventurous, I can vouch for this very special dish, for which you will need a chicken weighing four to five pounds, a small can of oysters, lemon juice, some brown breadcrumbs, and, say, an ounce of butter. A little Cayenne pepper, too.

After cleaning the bird, run a little boiling water through the empty inside, so that it is warm enough to melt the butter, and thus provide a creamy inner coating.

NOW coarsely chop the drained oysters, toss them in lemon juice and then in brown breadcrumbs, and sprinkle with Cayenne pepper. Place this stuffing inside the chicken, paint the breast of the chicken with olive oil and cover with greased paper. Then roast in an open pan, basting at intervals with the liquid. Replace the paper each time after basting. Then, after an hour in a moderately hot oven, remove the paper, and allow the breast to gild until gently crisp, which should take another ten minutes. Strain the gravy and serve with the bird. You can also serve melted butter with this, flavoured with a little lemon juice. (*Continued on page* 66)

The table appointments in the colour picture on the facing page were kindly lent by Libertys, and the linen by Walpoles

Books make an acceptable gift at Christmas-time

BOOKS:

Reviewed by Trevor Allen

CHRISTMAS without a new circus book would be like snapdragon without brandy. But Ruth Manning-Sanders's **"The English Circus"** (Werner Laurie, 21s.) isn't just "one more." She understands circus folk and says there are no cowards among them, for cowardice means death. If they couldn't triumph over "accidents, fires, floods, escaped beasts, lack of money, dirty weather, hunger, cold, every adverse circumstance one can imagine"—well, they might as well pack up. She recalls an equestrienne with a broken leg who said in hospital: "Please, please, get me out of here! Take me back to the pitch where there is better air, and where the people have the right sort of eyes." Her aim is to convey the "gallant spirit, high tradition, courage, integrity, kindliness, skill —the essential *reality* of it all," and she succeeds in this well-written, illustrated history of permanent, not just passing, interest.

ONE of Chaplin's films was *The Circus* and his clowning genius is akin to that of the ring Joeys, though on a higher plane. Theodore Huff gives the fullest account of his life and work in **"Charlie Chaplin"** (Cassell, 25s.) with 146 photographs, mostly stills, and a descriptive index to all his films. An interesting reflection is that lack of height made his rôle possible; had he been but three inches taller, he himself admits, he could not have portrayed the comic little man who conquered the world.

I WOULDN'T go as far as saying that the world of fashion journalism is a circus, but Anne Scott-James must often have thought it so. For six years she edited a fashion magazine, and **"In The Mink"** (Michael Joseph, 12s. 6d.) is the inside story of a girl who joined one evasively called *Venus*. It had a wonderful staff, including a fluffy blonde nicknamed Mrs. Mink: "She had been given the job because she had an enormous alimony and could dress well beyond her salary. Though all three were called Mrs., none had a husband extant, nor, of course, any children. They had all been married at some time, but had mislaid their husbands *en route*." The witty debunking is nicely veiled, but those in the know have had the time of their lives spotting who's who and what's what, and how. . . .

BOOKS of London lore make good presents, and Simon Dewes puts plenty about historic worthies into **"Soho"** (Rich & Cowan, 18s.). It takes the form of non-stop talks between an exploring couple, Betty and Jim, and we have to accept that she would let him talk slabs of topographical memoir about Baron Neuhoff, Nollekins, Mrs. Cornelys and so forth, without wanting to push him off the kerb. Eavesdropping, we get graphic (*Continued on page 75*)

A FAVOURITE FOR DECEMBER

PHYLLIS BOTTOME calls adolescence to the early thirties "the years of challenge in which we must expose those hidden aims we have been choosing, and upon which we have built our life-plan, from our earliest childhood." Hence, the autobiographical sequel to *Search For A Soul* is **"The Challenge"** (Faber, 21s.) which carries her story up to her marriage after a long, broken engagement. In the interim came a Capri friendship and collaboration with French Paul who wanted from women "three months' undiluted ecstasy—and then a slammed door," and once said of the only one who left him: "I find that you forget the woman you have left—but the one who has left you—her—you never forget!"

Exquisitely she describes visits to Switzerland, Germany, the Riviera, Rome; contacts with Hall Caine, Ivor Novello, poets "H. D.," Ezra Pound—who taught her "how to read and write"—and Alice Meynell, "a tethered angel." She writes with a sensitive candour, an emotional earnestness that reminds me of Vera Brittain's *Testament Of Youth*. Hers, too, is an acutely distinctive book which will delight the intelligent

In **"The Challenge"** Phyllis Bottome (*left*) tells the courageous story of her life up to the time of her marriage

Anne Scott-James (*right*) who for six years edited a fashion magazine in London, now tells of her experiences in **"In The Mink"**

Pearl S. Buck (*left*) chooses Japan and America for the setting of her latest novel, **"The Hidden Flower"**

Astley's bill poster (*right*), April 29, 1893, is one of the delightful illustrations to Ruth Manning-Sanders's story of the history and development of **"The English Circus"**

Their Majesties (*left*) photographed on the terrace of Balmoral Castle is one of the numerous fine photographs included in **"The Royal Gardeners,"** by W. E. Shewell-Cooper

One of the amusing drawings which illustrates Giovanni Guareschi's humorous book **"Don Camillo And The Prodigal Son"**

Ours was a village where nothing ever happened . . . that is until something so unusual occurred it took our minds off everything else

To Confound The Wise

BY MOIRA VERSCHOYLE

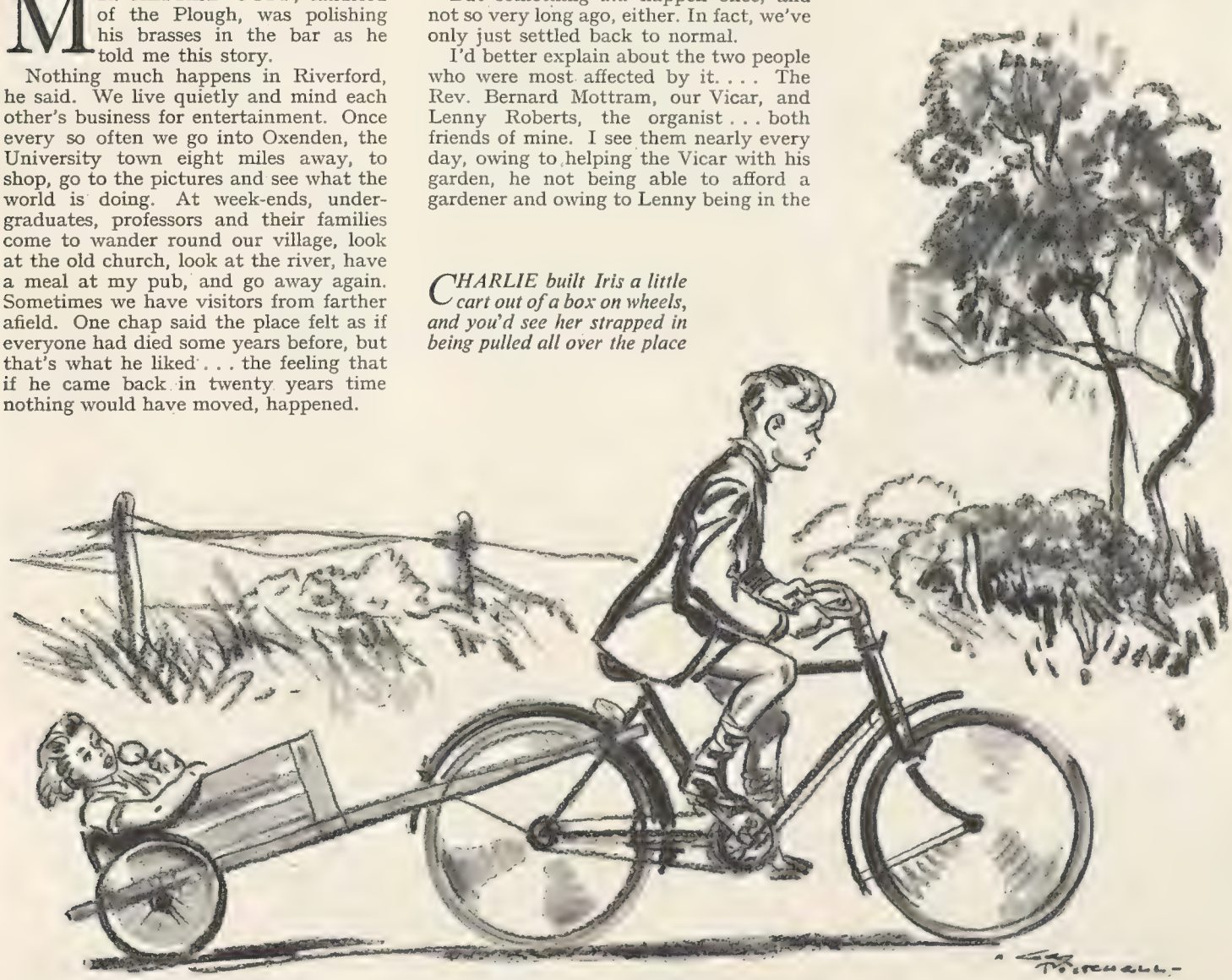
MR. ALFRED GOFF, landlord of the Plough, was polishing his brasses in the bar as he told me this story.

Nothing much happens in Riverford, he said. We live quietly and mind each other's business for entertainment. Once every so often we go into Oxenden, the University town eight miles away, to shop, go to the pictures and see what the world is doing. At week-ends, undergraduates, professors and their families come to wander round our village, look at the old church, look at the river, have a meal at my pub, and go away again. Sometimes we have visitors from farther afield. One chap said the place felt as if everyone had died some years before, but that's what he liked . . . the feeling that if he came back in twenty years time nothing would have moved, happened.

But something *did* happen once, and not so very long ago, either. In fact, we've only just settled back to normal.

I'd better explain about the two people who were most affected by it. . . . The Rev. Bernard Mottram, our Vicar, and Lenny Roberts, the organist . . . both friends of mine. I see them nearly every day, owing to helping the Vicar with his garden, he not being able to afford a gardener and owing to Lenny being in the

CHARLIE built Iris a little cart out of a box on wheels, and you'd see her strapped in being pulled all over the place



pub most evenings with his harmonica. He's a lively little fellow, in spite of being blinded in the last war, and other drawbacks, chief of which is his sister Agnes.

Agnes Roberts is a bitter woman . . . grumbling at everything, but mostly at Lenny on account of his blindness which she thinks was provided to thwart her chances of marriage, although I can't picture many chaps going for a woman with a tongue like hers, with or without a blind brother. She was mad at me because she said I encouraged Lenny to come to the Plough, and she was mad at the Vicar because he laughed when she tried to make him scold Lenny.

But then the Vicar always sided with Lenny. He used to say it did people good to see anyone able to be lively in spite of his troubles. He used to get him music done in Braille and you'd hear all sorts of tunes floating out of the church on week-days . . . waltzes and such. It gave Lenny an interest and the kids of the village liked it, too.

THEY were very partial to the Vicar, the kids were. To tell the truth, I think he was more at home with them than with some of his learned professor acquaintances from Oxenden. He's said to be quite learned himself, the Vicar . . . a very fine naturalist they say he is, has written books and all, but to hear him talk you'd never think it, he's so simple and easy. Especially when you see him larking about with the children.

You'd see them all messing about in the ditches, hunting for sticklebacks and so on, the Vicar with his trousers rolled up and covered in mud. There was one kid very keen on it, young Charlie Goddard, and he was always bringing the Vicar specimens that he wanted to learn about. The Vicar took him along on all his expeditions.

Charlie had a young sister, Iris, two years old, and he was always left to mind her when his parents were out at work, but he built her a little cart out of a box on wheels, strapped her in, and you'd see Iris being pulled all over the place tied behind his bike. Summer and winter. Iris didn't seem to mind so long as she had a lollie to suck. Her face was always covered in mud, for they'd leave the specimens in the box beside her, and they'd get mixed up with the lollies.

Lady Forrester from the Manor didn't quite approve of the Vicar. Although she couldn't help liking him she thought he wasn't dignified enough, and he dressed like a tramp.

Another who didn't approve of him was our young Doctor Symes.

"How a man with his knowledge can have so little common sense beats me," he'd say.

What he meant was the Vicar's obstinacy over Lenny. He'd told the Doctor one day that he always kept on praying that Lenny would get his sight back . . . in spite of the Doctor telling him it was impossible. You see, the Doctor had taken Lenny to see all sorts of specialists and they'd all said the same . . . but the Vicar just said he'd keep on praying, maybe something would be found that could do the trick even if it hadn't yet.

The Doctor said he wasn't surprised the Vicar had only children for a congregation, the foolishness he talked would put off reasonable people.

BUT the real reason the church was empty was that we are a farming community hereabouts, and everyone except the children (and Lady Forrester) are pretty busy all the time. The children went to church all right because they loved the way he told them jokes and stories from the pulpit to keep them interested, and Lady Forrester didn't mind because she always slept through the sermon anyway. She woke up good and proper later, when she gave the Vicar her views on everyone, when he lunched with her at the Manor later. He always lunched with her Sundays.

But it was on account of the scarcity of people who could manage church that there was a plan in high quarters

THE Vicar jumped off his bicycle at the gate and came down the path with the children to where I was standing with the Dean and Lenny

to include our parish in the parish of Minster . . . and that would mean losing our Vicar, and none of us wanted that to happen. He'd always seemed part of the place, and young and old brought him their worries. So the idea that we might just have a stranger coming now and then to preach and no one to bother about our kids or the old ones made us pretty fed up. But you know how it is, until a thing happens you never really think it will . . . at least that's the way in this part of the world. And then something so unusual happened that it took our minds off everything else.

ONE Sunday morning, Lenny thought he'd go for a swim with some kids, because he had a bit of a hangover and hoped it would clear it. He couldn't swim in the river on account of being blind and the treacherous currents, but they went in at a nice little sandy pool fed from a stream on Martin Huggett's land . . . he's a local farmer. Afterwards he went on to the Church to play for the morning service. He and the Vicar were coming to the Plough for lunch, as my guests, Lady F. being away and the Vicar having no one to do for him on Sundays.

Well, after the service was over and the people gone, the Vicar asked Lenny to play him a new piece of music he'd got for him. Lenny said his head was aching and he'd rather not.

"Have you a temperature, do you think?" asked the Vicar.

Lenny said he was afraid it might be just a hangover as he'd been pretty late in the pub the night before.

"But you look flushed, let me feel your forehead, because if it's burning you *have* got a tempera-

(*Continued on page* 60)

Though symmetrical and practical in the modern idiom, this scheme of decoration compromises with austerity and achieves the casual charm which is best expressed in the familiar term "homely"

It Amounts To This

THE woman with a fondness for antiques—and a long enough purse—is not likely to meet any very serious problems if she decides she would like a Queen Anne bedroom or a Regency drawing-room. For most of us have a pretty good idea what they look like and, if we haven't, a hundred museums and a thousand text-books are ready to fill the gap.

How much more difficult the plight of the woman who merely aspires to a comfortable home in "typical mid-twentieth century" style. Museums won't help her for the era has not yet achieved the dignity of "period." The text-books may only confuse for the writers are themselves too close to the subject. Exhibitions are better but just because they *are* exhibitions they are designed primarily to be looked at, not lived in.

If we could visit period rooms at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the year 2152 what, I wonder, should we find labelled "Typical Early Elizabeth II?" Will it be the "slick," plant-festooned decorator's room of the "modern" exhibition? Will it be the bogus "reproduction" room of so many shop windows?

My guess is that it will be a judicious blend of a dozen "schools," the product of that essentially English genius for absorbing a dozen conflicting influences without yielding wholly to any.

Almost inevitably it must be guesswork—painting a picture of the room a future curator of the Victoria and Albert will regard as typical of our time. For, decoratively, as in other ways, this is an age of daring experiment, when the only golden rule is that there is no golden rule.

A score of influences have been at work to free us from the old shibboleths and the old inhibitions. We experiment with our colour regardless of the once sacrosanct rules. We paint our walls dark bottle green and deep Venetian red and paper our ceiling navy blue if it seems good to do so.

But of one thing we can be sure. Two centuries hence that room of the mid-twentieth century will be clearly the logical development of all that has gone before. For it is a trick that history has—this fitting into its logical niche what seemed at the time isolated and unrelated to anything else. So, if we take a look at the rooms before our Early Elizabeth II piece we shall have a better idea what to expect.

First there will probably be the "Post- First World War" room—the decorative equivalent of Alexander's Ragtime Band. And how the jazzy patterns and colours—

What does the new Elizabethan decoration amount to in the home? Asked to define it for us, Michael Sheridan concludes that it is a symposium of past characteristics with the unmistakable imprint of the present

The "decorator's room" . . . frankly functional, but does it satisfy our craving for cosiness?

remember "tange?"—will make our great-great-grandchildren blench.

Then the inevitable reaction. Remember the plain white walls, the monochromatic colour schemes, the clinical steel and chromium that were the essence of good taste in the early thirties? "Functionalism" was a new cry. All unnecessary decoration was swept ruthlessly aside.

By 1939, the patient had recovered sufficiently to sit up and demand a little sustenance in the form of colour, pattern and decoration—still carefully labelled "it is dangerous to exceed the stated dose." In carpets and fabrics we were still rather afraid of the realistic floral treatment that had been the undoing of our Victorian grandmothers. We felt safer with the irreproachable modernity of abstract design.

But we were due for a little relief from the timid three-lines-and-a-spot era when the war called a halt to decorative adventures. Yet the war itself gave enormous impetus to the trend already visible in 1939. For it made us long for brilliant, uninhibited colour in contrast to black-out, for decorative, non-utilitarian flowers in contrast to our war-time cabbage patches, for an almost feminine frilliness in contrast to the masculinity of uniforms. It made us long, if you like, for the sheer fun of which we had been deprived so long, first by the asceticism of the reformers and then by the war.

Almost formal . . . but the English home is never really formal. It is always growing and developing

All this bore fruit rapidly in the world of fashion which produced the exaggeratedly feminine New Look. For obvious reasons, fashion changes less rapidly and less radically in decoration. But the same influences will be apparent in our typical early Elizabethan room. Its essential qualities will be colour and gaiety, pattern and elegance—and, yes, ornament.

Our museum-piece will show that although the new Elizabethans were no longer afraid of pattern they had made it their servant, getting the most out of it by contrasting it with plain surfaces. There probably won't be an abstract design in the room. Carpets and fabrics will tell of a joyous return to the floral tradition that has been typically English since we first made ourselves "pleasure gardens" about the time of the first Elizabeth. But don't expect the naturalistic Victorian nosegay. For, to-day, nature is an inspiration rather than a model to be slavishly copied.

It amounts to this : the typical room of our age will be unmistakably that of a people with little leisure and little domestic help—which is one reason why I doubt whether it will be cluttered with the plethora of pot plants that has become a cliché in many an exhibition room. The furniture, then, will be functional but it will show that we have learnt to combine functionalism with art—as though the bare bones of the thirties, still visible underneath, have been clothed with flesh.

But what will surely intrigue our descendents of 2152 most of all is the ingenious way that we have avoided the pitfalls of both the raucous twenties and the monotonous thirties. For they will see for the first time a new factor creeping into interior decoration : contrast of texture. It may well prove to be the dominant factor of our period piece. For texture, rather than pattern contrast is the central theme of all post-war decoration. It may be the contrast of smooth plaster and natural brick. It may be the contrast of rough homespun tweed and sleek timber. It may be the contrast of linen and tufted cotton. It may be the contrast of a matt yarn with a lustrious one combined in one fabric. But, whatever form it takes, texture contrast has enabled us to achieve restfulness without monotony and contrast without disharmony. And that is no light achievement.

Is it vague—this glimpse at a museum piece of the future? Yes, because if the curator has done his job properly, it won't be a stereotyped exhibition piece designed by a famous interior decorator. It will be the kind of room any one of us might have made for ourselves, taking what we deemed good from the "professional" and discarding what was irelevant to our own needs, something so highly individual as to defy definition yet bearing the unmistakable imprint of our common heritage.

Nylon Throughout

Nylon knitting yarn which has all the practical qualities of nylon fabric, is knitted in the same way as wool, except that particular attention must be paid to the tension for correct measurements

FRONT

Cast on 120 sts. on No. 12 needles and rib for 2 ins. in k. 1, p. 1. Change to No. 13 needles and rib for a further 3 ins. Change to st.st. and work 1½ ins. Change back to No. 12 needles and inc. at both ends of this and every following 4th row 18 times (156 sts.). Before completion of these shapings and when work measures 11½ ins. from beg. work as follows :

K. 74 in grey, k. 2 central sts. in yellow, k. 74 grey.

Next row.—P. 74 grey, p. 2 yellow, p. 74 grey.

Next row.—K. 72 grey, 2 yellow, 2 grey, 2 yellow, 72 grey. P. back in this order. Continue in this way, keeping order of colours and working an additional 2 sts. check at either side of centre on every k. row until all sts. are in check. When work measures 12½ ins. from beg. cast off 6 sts. at beg. of next 2 rows and 3 sts. at beg. of following 2 rows, then take 2 tog. at both ends of next 8 k. rows (122 sts.). Now continue on remaining sts. until work measures 16 ins. from beg.

Next row.—K. 61, turn and work back. Continue on these 61 sts., taking 2 tog. at neck edge on next and every following 3rd row 17 times in all. When work measures 19¾ ins. cast off 6 sts. at beg. of next 4 k. rows and 5 sts. at beg. of following 4 k. rows. Rejoin wool at centre and complete second side to match first, rev. all shapings.

BACK

Work as for front until completion of armhole shapings. Now work up without shaping until work measures 17 ins.

Next row.—K. 61, turn and p. back. Continue on these sts. until work measures 19¾ ins., then cast off 6 sts. at beg. of next 4 k. rows and 5 sts. at beg. of following 5 k. rows. Cast off remaining 17 sts. Rejoin wool at centre and complete second shoulder to match first, but rev. all shapings and casting on an additional 5 sts. at centre to form a placket wrap, working these sts. in k. on every row.

SLEEVES (both alike)

Cast on 78 sts. on No. 13 needles and rib for 1 in. Change to No. 12 needles and inc. at both ends of this and every following 6th row 19 times in all (116 sts.). Continue until work measures 11 ins., then cast off 6 at beg. of next 2 rows, then take 2 tog. at both ends of next 4 k. rows, then take 2 tog. at both ends of every row 36 times. Cast off 6 sts. at beg. of next 4 rows.

TO MAKE UP

Press all pieces under damp cloth. Join shoulder seams. Now with set of No. 13 needles pointed at both ends pick up 24 sts. from left back, including placket, 65 from left front, 65 from right front and 19 from right back. Now rib for 1 in., taking 2 tog. on either side of central k. st. at point of V and 2 shoulder corners. Cast off ribwise fairly loosely. Set in sleeves. Join sleeve and side seams. Catch down placket. Sew on the buttons and make five matching loops for back opening. Press seams.

This jumper was designed for Wakefield Greenwood's 3-ply Luxury Nylaness, taking 7 ozs. of grey and 1 oz. of gold. One set each of No. 12 and No. 13 needles, and one set of No. 13 pointed at each end, and 5 buttons. Tension is 8½ sts. and 12 rows to one inch measured over the stocking stitch on No. 12 needles. The instructions are to fit a 34-inch bust

On The Straight

THIS BED-WRAP TAKES 8 OZS. "WENDY" SUPER BOTANY 3-PLY WOOL AND IS WORKED ON NO. 9 AND NO. 13 NEEDLES.

BED-WRAP IN LEAF STITCH.

THIS bed-wrap is made from one straight piece of knitting, so it is possible for even the novice knitter to experiment with alternative stitches and effects. Instructions are given here for three alternative stitches, two lacy and one close weave for a warmer garment. The abbreviations used throughout the pattern are: k.—knit, p.—purl, wfd.—wool forward, s.—slip, p.s.s.o.—pass the slipped st. over, m.1—make a st. by bringing wool to front of work and over pin to back again after a k. st. and before a k. st., tog.—together, patt.—pattern, inc.—increase by knitting or purling twice into same stitch, rep.—repeat.

Using No. 13 pins, cast on 74 sts., and work in k. 1, p. 1, rib for 5 ins., for the cuff.

Next row.—(Wrong side of work.) (Inc.) 73 times, k. 1. (147 sts.) Change to No. 9 pins and continue in leaf stitch patt. with 5 sts. at each side in garter st. thus:

LEAF STITCH

1st row.—K. 5, * k. 1, wfd., s. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o., k. 3, k. 2 tog., wfd., rep. from * to last 6, k. 6.

2nd and every alternate row.—K. 5, p. to last 5, k. 5

3rd row.—K. 5, * k. 1, wfd., k. 1, s. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o. k. 1, k. 2 tog., k. 1, wfd., rep. from * to last 6, k. 6.

5th row.—K. 5, * k. 1, wfd., k. 2, s. 1, k. 2 tog., p.s.s.o., k. 2, wfd., rep. from * to last 6, k. 6.

7th row.—K. 5, * k. 2, k. 2 tog., wfd., k. 1, wfd., s. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o., k. 1, rep. from * to last 6, k. 6.

9th row.—K. 5, * k. 1, k. 2 tog. (k. 1, wfd.) twice, k. 1, s. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o., rep. from * to last 6, k. 6.

11th row.—K. 5, k. 2 tog., * k. 2, wfd., k. 1, wfd., k. 2, s. 1, k. 2 tog., p.s.s.o., rep. from * to last 12, k. 2, wfd., k. 1, wfd., k. 2, s. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o., k. 5.

12th row.—As 2nd row. These 12 rows form one patt. Continue in patt: until work measures approximately 61 ins., finishing at the end of a patt.

Next row.—(Right side of work.) (K. 2 tog.) 73 times, k. 1 (74 sts.). Change to No. 13 pins and k. 1, p. 1, rib for 5 ins. Cast off.

MAKING UP

Press all parts except ribbing. Join each cuff for 14½ ins.

FAN STITCH

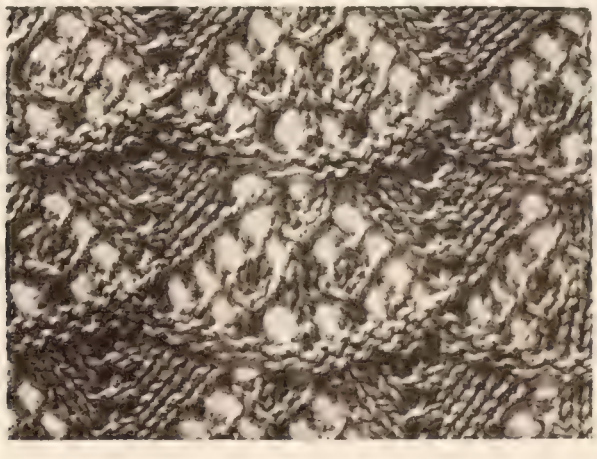
For this stitch pattern, the shaping after the ribbed cuff has been worked would be k. 1, inc., k. 1 (inc.) 70 times, k. 1 (145 sts.).

1st row.—(Right side of work.) K. 5, p. to last 5, k. 5.

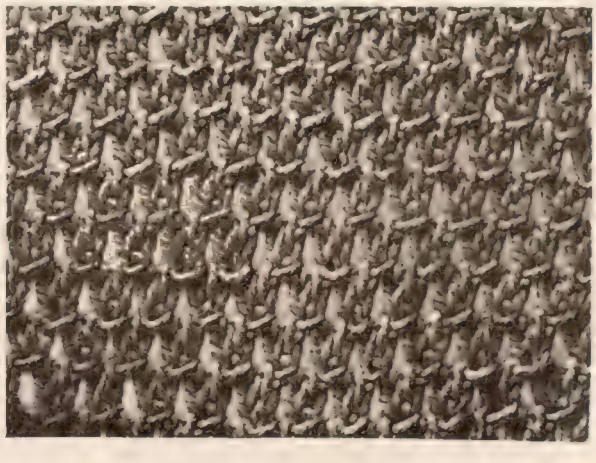
2nd row.—K.

3rd row.—K. 6, * k. 1, wfd., (*Continued on page 73*)

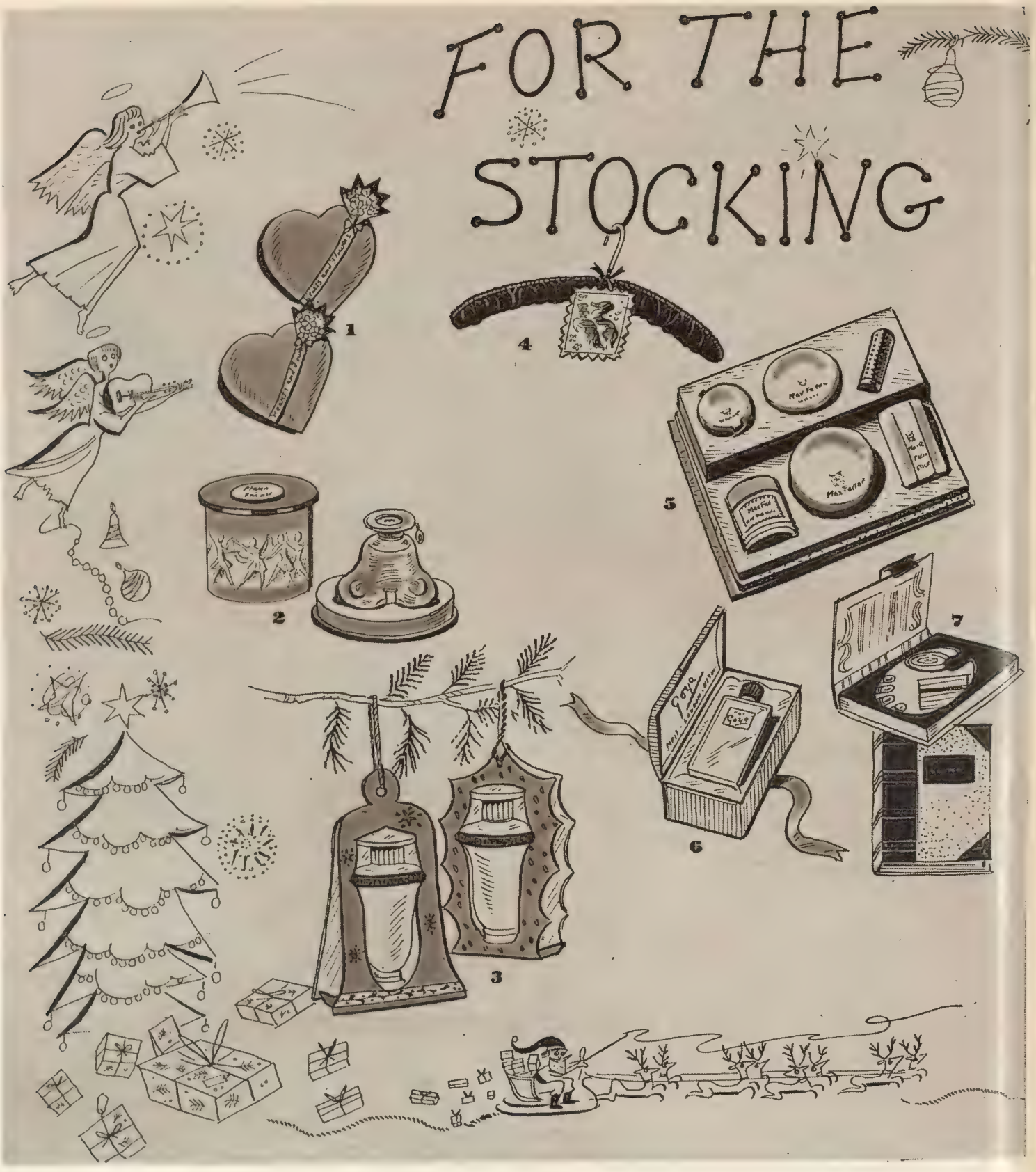
FAN STITCH.



TRELLIS STITCH.



FOR THE STOCKING



1. Luxury soap is irresistible, especially when it comes as romantically as Bronnley's heart-shaped tablet, in the lovely Hearts and Flowers perfume. The large heart is 5s. 9d., but there are also dainty boxes of three smaller hearts for 6s. 9d.

2. As lovely to give as to receive. Yardley's "Flair" perfume in its attractive tricorne bottle. From 35s. Or Flair Bath Oil, which tints and perfumes the water, 19s. 6d.

3. Lustres to decorate the Christmas-tree by Dorothy Gray contain Midnight Coral or Ile Verte Body Rub (9s. 7d.), Midnight or Nosegay Toilet Water (10s. 5d.), or Bath Essence in either of these perfumes (13s. 9d.), in pretty flagons with pale-blue flower-embossed stoppers.

4. Pad a clothes-hanger and cover it with ruched black satin. Attach one of Elizabeth Arden's exquisitely designed perfume sachets and there you have a very special gift. Small perfume sachets, in Blue Grass or My Love, can be bought in boxes of three, 29s. 2d. Large Sachets, 17s. 6d. each.

5. Max Factor have packed in an attractive and gay carton six popular items from their range, to make a luxury gift set at a reasonable price. It contains lipstick, face powder, Pan-cake, dry rouge, make-up foundation and Night Facial Stik. The price 33s. 10d., the actual cost of the items only.

6. Goya present their perfumes in charming Gift Chests. The little ivory case can later be used as a cigarette-box.

7. The Gala Book entitled "Introduction to Make-up," keeps strictly to the story. Designed for the young girl, the book holds four miniature lipsticks, a handbag-size box of powder and a trial size foundation. A popular presentation edition for 6s. 6d. for the youngster just beginning to make-up

8. Something to make. A make-up cape fashioned from a circle of plastic or terry towelling. Bind the edges, add a ribbon tie fastening at the neck and add her initials on the corner embroidered on towelling, stencilled on plastic.

9. A different way with soap. Charles of the Ritz have packed a bath-size tablet of luxury soap with a sponge and made it festive with cellophane and ribbon. Price 8s. 6d.

Party Politics

IF a special Christmas occasion finds you in less than your usual form, some kind of emergency beauty treatment is indicated. At any other time, it is bad policy to cover up a spot, to put a good face on a cold or to mask fatigue lines with make-up . . . but Christmas comes but once a year.

CYCLAX were asked their advice on the problem of the spot which always seems to appear conspicuously before the party. If you have sufficient warning, anoint the spot with Cyclax Special Lotion last thing, and leave overnight. This will draw out the impurities, reduce the inflammation and hasten its departure.

On the day of the party, allow sufficient time for your preparations to include a Twenty-Minute Masque. This, of course, will not make the spots disappear, but it will refine and smooth the skin generally and prepare for the make-up. Use GlamOtint as a foundation, to conceal the blemishes without making them worse. Use a powder rouge, which is kinder to a blemished skin than a cream one, and as gay a lipstick and as much eye make-up as you consider distractingly effective.

IF the Christmas rush—or the festivities—have left unmistakeable signs of fatigue on your complexion, follow Elizabeth Arden's recommendation for a pre-party treatment.

Velva Cream Masque is perfect for a quick, refreshing treatment for a tired face. First cleanse the face and neck, pat with Skin Tonic and then smooth the creamy masque on to face and throat. Put eye pads over the eyes and leave the masque for fifteen minutes to an hour, according to the time at your disposal. It is most effective if you lie down and relax completely meanwhile. Remove the masque with a damp pad of cotton-wool and then make-up, using a warm-toned powder and foundation to give a becoming warmth to the skin.

WHEN the party finds you with the legacy of a cold —skin like emery-paper, eyes puffed and bleary and poor little nose pink and tender from blowing—Dorothy Gray has a toning treatment. For this, first cleanse with her Sensitive Skin Cream, a light-textured nourishing cream kind to tender skins. Take off with cotton-wool pads, moistened with Orange Flower Skin Tonic which is fresh, mild and non-astringent. Bathe the eyes with Optrex eye lotion. Apply another very thin film of Sensitive Skin Cream and, on top of this, an application of Masque Frappe. The under layer of cream will keep the mask from over-stimulating a sensitive skin, but will help to firm it up. Place eye-pads on the eyelids and lie quietly for fifteen minutes, feet raised on a pillow. Remove the eye-pads and sponge the mask off gently with lukewarm water and then make up.

Smooth face and neck (arms and shoulders, too, if your dress is décolletée) with Blushery Weather Lotion before applying Finisheen, cream or liquid, whichever you prefer. Choose a deepish shade to mask any minor blemishes and to counteract the pallor of the cold. Use cream rouge, which blends into a pale skin better than powder rouge, and a creamy toned powder with no pink in it. A smear of skin cream on the lips prevents cracking; powder over and then apply lipstick.

Beauty by Chrysis

If you want help with your beauty problems, write to me at "Britannia & Eve," Ingram House, 195-198, Strand, London, W.C.2, enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope.

SPECIAL BUT

1

2

3

4

★

INFORMAL

5

1. Rose silk striped with gold. A blouse to team with a long or short skirt. The bishop sleeves are cuffed and tied with a velvet riband. *Pastella* at *Woolands*, £6 10s.

2. Yellow and black diamond check needlecord velvet blouse. *Simon Ellis* at *Peter Robinson*, £2 19s. 6d. Untarnishable gilt bangles and ear-rings from *Dickins and Jones*.

3. Tailored and practical. A cocktail suit in green shantung-weave taffeta to go to Christmas parties with assurance. *Marcus* from *Marshall and Snelgrove, London*, £12.

4. Sheer black over white silk organza for an evening blouse with the feminine air. The shoulder-wide collar and deep cuffs are finely pleated. *Pastella* at *Harrods*, £11 11s.

5. Practical with a short skirt, elegant with a long one. *Susan Small's* draped silk jersey evening sweater. *Wakeford's of Chelsea*, £8 8s. Jewellery from *Dickins and Jones*.

6

6. The best-loved fabric—velveteen. A party-goer with many other uses, in garnet brown and alternative colours. 15 gns., *Liberty*. Pictures by Michael Williams.

Margaret Sharp, Christmas

SHOPPING

Send the young in heart, whatever their age, a musical Christmas card which plays a charming version of "Jingle Bells." It costs only 5s. 11d. from the Army and Navy Stores. No Christmas is complete without a snowstorm, real or artificial. This one is 18s. 6d. Liberty's.

These fine rayon and Egyptian cotton dinner napkins come from Walpole's. They are sold in sets of a dozen, each one individually woven with a different design on the theme of country life. In cream they are 6 gns., but a more expensive hand-painted series is also available.

Tartan sling-back slippers, trimmed with red fur, from The Scotch House, price 25s. Joyce pumps, embroidered with gold, are from Selfridge's, 59s. 9d. Another idea, not illustrated, are Morland's new sheepskin house bootees, for those who put their comfort first, 65s. 9d.

Any ardent motorist would receive a map-measurer with joy. The wheel of the measurer is run along the road on the map, then the exact mileage can be calculated from the meter according to the scale of the map. The measurer costs 13s. 6d., at Marshall and Snelgrove.

FOR YOU

This adorable table lamp, with its white lace trimmed shade, baby blue bows and dainty flowers in a pastel blue cage, is the perfect gift for the proud possessor of a frilly, feminine bedroom. It costs 6 gns. at Marshall and Snelgrove, with a matching wall lamp for £4 15s.

Player's No. 3 cigarettes, always appreciated by the discriminating smoker, have a special wrapping to convey seasonal good wishes. Price 19s. 7d. a hundred. Alternatively give glass tankards by Chance Bros., plain or decorated. Prices range from 1s. 4d. to 3s. 3d.

The smoker business friend will be delighted with the latest engine-turned metal Ronson Penciliter, 55s. Absent-minded folk would appreciate a set of leather address tags to attach to keys, umbrella or suitcase. They are 12s. 6d. each from Orbis Studio, Knightsbridge.

This tartan tea-cosy has a miniature Glengarry tucked into a side pocket to do duty for a handle holder. Price 28s. 6d. from the Scotch House, Knightsbridge. This is only one of a selection of delightful gifts with an authentic Scots flavour that can be found here at varying prices.

GADGETS *Galore*

BY
MARGARET COSTER

IN every household there is a knife with a thin, sharp blade and a stunted handle—nobody knows how it got that way or even where it came from in the first place, but as soon as the agonised cry of "Where 's the knife?" goes up everyone knows which knife is meant. Such ancient treasures are worth, to my mind, all the gadgets ever invented. I have a knife like this and a sup-with-the-Devil spoon with an enormously long handle which seemed to materialise from nowhere and is ideal for basting. . . .

But what is this curious frenzy that possesses quite sensible women at exhibitions—the moral paralysis that overtakes them in the kitchen department of a big store? I call it "gadgeteering," and have been carried away by it myself into many a foolish purchase. Disciplined by women's magazines, I would not buy even a pair of gloves without stern self-examination—are they what I really need? Do they go with my other clothes? Can I wear them in town and country? But having lived a full and happy life without the help of waffles or stoned cherries, I am suddenly convinced in the presence of a waffle-iron or a cherry-stoner that without them the daily round is one of unutterable dreariness and drudgery. Aren't you?

How much space will it take up? Is it going to be tiresome to wash up, to assemble and put away? Does it really save time when all this is done? Will I use it often—honestly? Even can I make it *work?* It 's better to ask these questions before gadgeteering and to buy only what one has really been missing and needing. Perhaps, too, there is some perfectly efficient substitute which costs less or nothing at all.

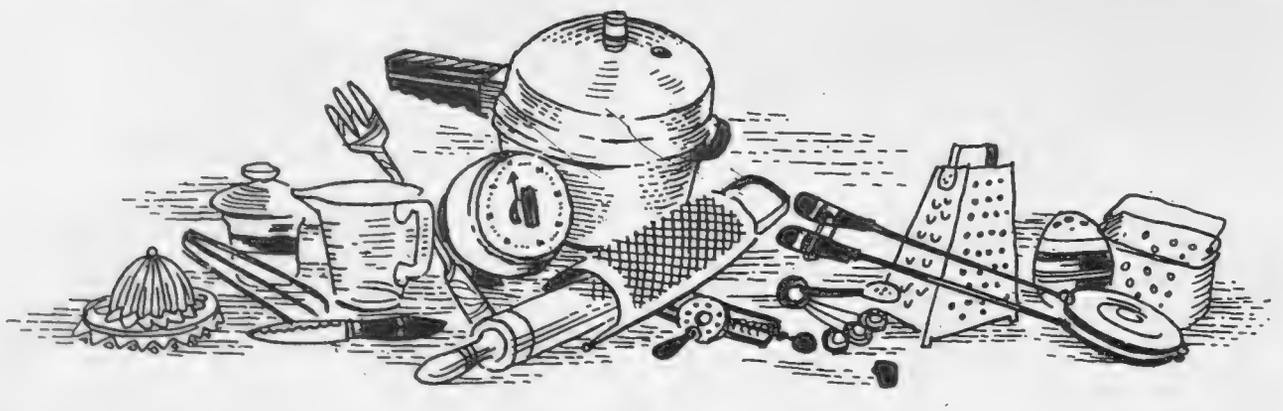
DOUBLE boilers and bains-marie are easy to improvise; puddings can be steamed in jelly-moulds—the solid copper and china ones of yesterday, not the thin ones of to-day; a filing basket makes an excellent vegetable rack; a pair of coal-tongs is useful when bottling; a thick paint-brush will do for a pastry brush; a fountain-pen filler for syphoning off cream; and there 's the old trick of using an old-fashioned marble wash-stand top as a pastry-board.

The implements I prize most are, nearly all of them, as old as cookery itself—a set of wooden spoons, some really sharp knives (and a steel to sharpen them on), a spatula or palette knife as flexible as the sole of a ballerina's slipper, an enormous wooden ladle, an old-fashioned spiral wire whisk that performs miracles of de-lumping and uncurdling, and is the best whisk of all for everything but egg-whites; a small saw-knife and a pair of scissors demoted to kitchen use. To me these are the absolute essentials. But almost as indispensable I find a really good mincer with a generous feed, a grater that doesn't grate off the tips of your fingers—there 's a good one like a small mincer that clamps on to the table and deals faithfully by nuts and chocolate, too—a large vegetable mill of the French type for mashed potatoes and other purées—this *is* a bore to wash up, but it 's worth it; a colander with a long handle and a good assortment of strainers; a fish-slice and a perforated spoon; a lemon-squeezer, a pudding basin with a clamp-on lid so that no cloth is needed; a measuring jug and a pair of scales with weights.

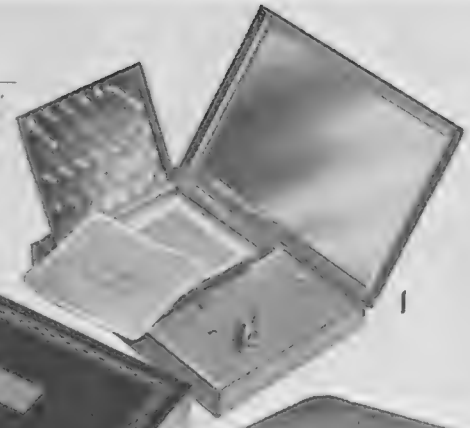
THEN, if you take your cooking seriously, I think you need, too, a small double boiler for delicate sauces made with eggs; a wire salad basket that absolves one from dabbing tentatively at wet lettuce leaves with a damp tea-towel; a conical strainer for sauces; a corkscrew with a lever or a vice—to prevent apoplexy; a tiny mill for herbs; a pestle and mortar—these are being made again but can be picked up cheaply at "junk-shops." A pepper mill is a "must" for the gourmet—there is all the difference in the world between freshly-ground pepper and the other sort, just as there is with coffee. And a coffee mill is very important if you drink coffee often. A percolator isn't quite so vital, but the glass ones are a lovely luxury and bring the charm of the alchemist's retreat to the most prosaic breakfast-table.

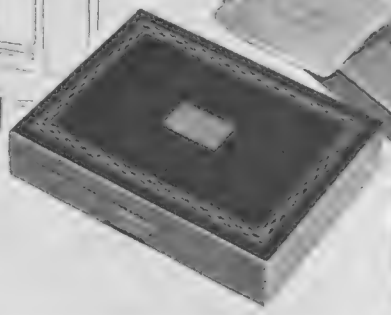
Over and above these things I 'd rather economise on gadgets and spend the money saved on first-rate basic equipment. What doth it profit a cook to have all the corers and stringers, slicers and stoners in the world if her pans be thin and ill-balanced and prone to burning? Those heavy iron pans from the Continent, for instance, overlaid with bright-coloured enamel, are not cheap, but are worth the high price, for you can start a stew on top of the stove in them, then put them in the oven and bring them to the table. They hold the heat amazingly and will withstand the most careless and forgetful cook.

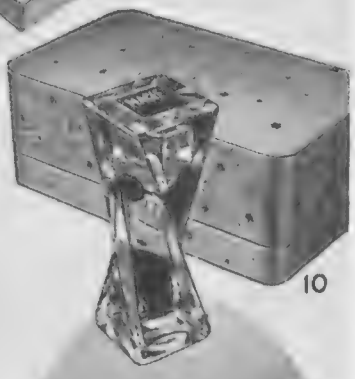
(*Continued on page* 66)

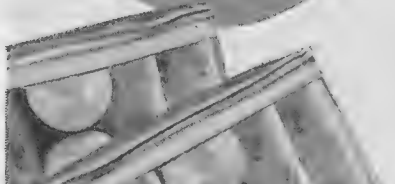


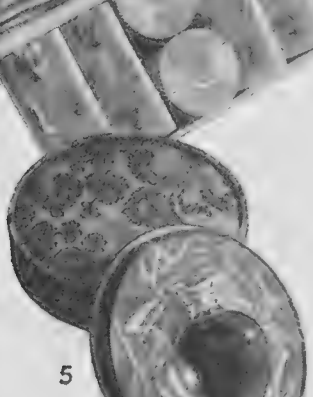
FORTNUM & MASON

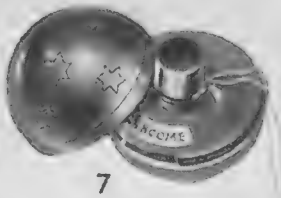












1. Musical compacts from Switzerland. Hand engraved, combined silver and gilt, satin finished or black enamel, gold engraved. Lift lid, release knob and listen to delightful melodies: (1) The Third Man; (2) Brahms Lullaby; (3) Blue Danube; (4) Stardust; (5) La Vie en Rose; (6) Anniversary Song. Please state second and third choice. Limited stocks .....7 gns. and 8 gns. each

2. "AUTANA" Scintillating new perfume by Guerlain, attractively boxed .....85/- & 125/-

3. "TRÉSOR" a perfume direct from Paris with the warmth and richness that the House of Lancôme alone can produce. A "Topaz" set on a bed of satin in a luxurious purple box £17.6.6

4. "FORTNUM'S OWN" airtight travel kit—4 bottles, 2 pots with rosebud design irremovable by spirits or water. Binding on zip case matches caps and lids, pink or blue .....complete 55/-

5. Marcel Rochas "FEMME" £7.17.6 £12.0.0 £19.15.2
Refills .....£4. .0.0 £6.0.0 £9.17.6

6. Royal blue or red plush casket, containing 350 assorted pastel face-tissues, exclusive to Fortnum's 21/-

7. "Magie Sphere" with screwtop 62/6

8. Made exclusively for Fortnum's. Fruit or Flower bowls, specially processed to hold water, containing feather-light bath salts in assorted perfumes. Hand-made in processed-type Dresden. Shaded pastel tints, pink/cream, lilac/cream, green/cream, blue/cream —
Bowls .....37/6, 47/6 & 63/-
Troughs for flowers .....55/- & 65/-

9. Elegant gunmetal and gilt compact with inner lid...63/-
Hand-engraved initial 7/6 extra, smaller initials 3/6 each

10. Lancôme "Magie" perfume in white satin jewel box, sprinkled with multi-coloured stars ..£18.15.0, £11.15.0

Whilst in our Perfumery Dept. visit the attractive "Dorothy Gray Boutique" where you may receive expert advice on the care of your skin and the art of make-up.

FORTNUM'S *exciting full-colour* CHRISTMAS CATALOGUE *is now ready and will be sent on request.*

perfumery . . . first floor

FORTNUM & MASON

181 PICCADILLY · LONDON · W.1 · REGENT 8040

A MESSAGE for MOTHER

When your child refuses good food at mealtimes, looks pale and listless—these are often signs the youngster is constipated. When you notice them, act at once, Mother!

To bring back your child's eager appetite and high spirits 'California Syrup of Figs' is Mother's natural choice. This laxative, which contains extracts of both senna and ripe figs, is gentle but sure in action—besides, children really love its pleasant taste.

'California Syrup of Figs' will soon regulate the youngster's system and back will come those high spirits and eager appetite.

Make sure your child is regular, healthy and happy—buy a bottle of 'California Syrup of Figs' today (or you can ask for 'Califig' for short) . . . and be sure to look for these registered trade marks on the carton.

Have a nicer tea with "Bermaline" Bread and butter

15 perfumes!

from all over the world blend to produce its glorious fragrance. This silk-soft powder gives comfort and daintiness to the most sensitive skin.

Cuticura TALCUM

The Wine

BY Christmas it is firmly believed that wine prices will have reached rock-bottom; that supplies will be ample and that the quality of the 1943, 1945, 1947 and 1949 red and white wines that will be drunk during the holiday season will be among the finest ever.

The fabulous prices charged for Bordeaux wines which were in short supply during the war helped to create the impression in the post war years and among a whole decade of the population that wine was only for the rich.

Prices were high because we were living on fast dwindling stocks, but now all that has changed. To-day you can get a perfectly sound bottle of wine for less than the price of a couple of packets of cigarettes.

Contrary to popular belief there is no mystery about the art of wine buying and wine choosing. The generally accepted combination is white wine with the fish dishes; red wines with the meat and the game, and practically any wine at all with the cheese. Port, Madeira or brown sherry is usually served with the nuts and fruit.

However, if you like Sauternes with the fish, then drink it. You'll find you are in good company.

In fact the Marquis de Lur Saluces, owner of the world-famous Château d'Yquem—where the grapes are specially selected and only picked on the day they reach full maturity—will back you up. Or, if you fancy red wine with the fish, many of the *bon viveurs* of St. Emilion will be with you.

Excellent wines from Bordeaux—both red and white—will be obtainable in the shops this Christmas at anything from 6s. 6d. to 27s. 6d. a bottle with the exception of a few world-famous clarets which will cost as much as £2 10s.

For the connoisseur who can afford vintage wines—château bottled—the best years were, oddly enough, the odd-numbered ones, 1943, '45, '47 and '49 (although the 1943 and 1945 vintages are beginning to become short). These will be in the higher price brackets, of course.

To-day most of the châteaux in and around Bordeaux send their wines to this country for bottling because by so doing it can be sold cheaper. Bordeaux wines bottled in this country pay the Government a duty of 2s. 2d. a bottle. Château bottled wine must pay 3s. 11d. and Champagne bottled in France pays the British Government 6s. 3d. a bottle.

Selecting for Christmas drinking from the moderate price range I suggest the Beaujolais 1949. Though very new this is both a cheap and a reliable wine and there is nothing for the moment insipid about it. It will cost you about 7s. 6d. a bottle in London. Provincial prices tend to be higher, and this applies to all wines.

The white and red Mâcons are excellent, too, and like the Beaujolais, completely reliable at seven or eight shillings. Take the '47, '48 and '49 years.

Among the white Bordeaux, Barsac—a little sweet for some tastes but excellent for those that like it—is about ten shillings. Montbazaillac another good sweet wine to come on with the dessert in place of port or liqueurs, costs from eight to ten shillings.

Graves can be bought as low as 5s. 9d. in some places. It is sweeter than white Bordeaux, of course, but excellent. The Entre Deux Mers is a good example at about six shillings when the wine merchant is competitive.

Assorted hampers of Bordeaux wines can be bought in the shops and there are miniature bottles of many brands to be had off the pub shelves at a shilling or two each.

The great wine shippers Lebegue are now bringing in Vin Ordinaire to sell at 6s. 3d. a bottle in London and very good it is.

In some places wine can be bought by the litre now, that is a bottle and a third. The Valdepenas of Spain at 7s. 6d. a litre is good value; a generous wine with something of the Burgundy character but with the unmistakable Spanish flavour which some like.

lovely surprise

for CHRISTMAS

by **KAYSER BONDOR**

WHAT a lovely surprise . . . what an enchanting idea . . . Kayser Bondor for Christmas ! Thrill her with a gift specially chosen from this superb collection of tailored lingerie and stockings. Lovely to get or to give, these beautiful things are priced in the Christmas spirit . . . and how practical they are !

And perhaps a present for yourself . . . a suspender belt, or a brassiere, faultlessly moulded to your figure by Kayser Bondor.

give her

KAYSER BONDOR

TAILORED WITH **YOU** IN MIND

Be REGULAR without EFFORT

Here is good news for those who have trouble in keeping their systems 'regular.'

A special laxative—'Mil-Par'* is now on sale which will give them just the help they need. Actually it is a very fine combination of

'MILK OF MAGNESIA'**
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FROM FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE *to you*

". . . do not let this sacred work languish and die"

Appealing for this Hospital in "The Times" of November, 1901, Florence Nightingale, after her retirement, wrote "I ask and pray my friends . . . not to let this sacred work languish and die for want of a little more money."

Please give to our Appeal

The cause is magnificent — beds for educated women of limited means who cherish privacy. Additional subscriptions and donations of £10,000 per annum are urgently needed, for this Hospital is neither controlled nor supported by the State. Please send a gift . . . remember us in your will . . . do not let "this sacred work die for want of a little more money."

Florence Nightingale
HOSPITAL

19 Lisson Grove, London, N.W.1.
PADdington 6412.

Jam To-day

(*Continued from page* 33)

of the skirt is often hopelessly wrong. They should, indeed, result in a great saving of time, temper and money spent on alterations.

Now turn to a piece of the jig-saw about which very little seems to be known—the help the Ministry of Labour can give children leaving school who "don't know what they want to be." The Youth Employment Officer not only arranges specialist talks on careers to senior classes, he will also give personal interviews to children when leaving at which parents and a teacher can be present. The child's likes and dislikes are discussed and full information given about possible openings and also about any relevant information about apprenticement schemes, grants and scholarships. As the local employers keep in touch with the Youth Employment officer he is well able to give constructive advice. It is certain that, in the long run, this service must be of great economic benefit to the country as well as a great help to the individual.

NOW I should like to turn to the National Health Service, because I believe that here some people are missing the benefits they should be receiving through misconceptions about the nature of the Service.

In 1944, Mr. Winston Churchill, referring to the Coalition Government's decision to bring in a health service, spoke these memorable words :

> "Disease must be attacked, whether it occurs in the poorest or the richest man or woman, simply on the ground that it is the enemy. It must be attacked in the same way that the fire brigade will give its assistance in the humble cottage as readily as it will give it in the most important mansion."

These words might be taken as the key-note of the Health Service, for it is designed to provide the *best possible medical treatment to every man, woman and child in the country.*

There is still, surprisingly, a widespread belief that unless you are paying National Insurance you are not eligible for the health service. The confusion has arisen, perhaps, because both schemes became law at practically the same time and seem to have become inextricably mixed in people's minds. But it is not true. The health service is available to people both in and out of the Insurance Scheme.

There are other misconceptions. Take consultations. Many people think that in the Service the only medical advice they will get is from one G.P. On the contrary, specialists of every kind are available and the doctors in the Service are making full use of them. Nor will any doctor in the Service refuse, if asked, for a second opinion.

If you wish to see a specialist of your own choice, your Health Service doctor can send you to him. You pay for the one private consultation but should he recommend treatment or an operation that you can ill afford, you can move back into the Service for it.

If you do not wish to see your own specialist, your doctor will send you to see one at a hospital free of charge. Nowadays, more and more hospitals make appointments for consultations, which removes the danger of a tiresome wait in the outpatients' department.

But if your Health Service doctor thinks it necessary on medical grounds, he can arrange for a consultant to visit you in your own home without charge. During last year (1951) 157,970 patients were seen at home by specialists.

Even if your doctor is not in the Service (3,000 out of 21,000 are not), he can still recommend a patient for any treatment under it, whether hospital, maternity, ophthalmic or any other. But, of course, if he prescribes medicine, it will have to be paid for.

SECOND misconception—medicines. The bottle of medicine that was pretty well all the old-time panel patient could hope for is a thing of the past. There is no drug, however expensive, that cannot be prescribed by a Health Service doctor, *if he considers it necessary.* One reason why the Health Service is costing as much as it does is the use made by its doctors of the newly-discovered medicines, some of them so dear as to be beyond the means of many private patients.

As with medicines, so with treatments. No matter how specialized, whether massage, psychiatry, physiotherapy, medical gymnastics or any other, it will be given free, *provided the doctor considers it necessary.*

There are many other details of the Health Service, and, indeed, of our other social services, such as pensions, allowances, food and housing subsidies, roads, police and so on, about which too little is known. As responsible taxpayers, we should examine them carefully before deciding whether that 6s. 6d. is money thrown away or not.

END

Mawnan Smith's Christmas Party

(*Continued from page* 15)

"King of Redonda." Where is Redonda, and how came this regality?

Redonda is a small island in the Caribbean on which, in 1880, a trader landed, and finding it still apparently unclaimed, claimed it himself and presented it to his son, who later became famous as M. P. Shiel, the Irish novelist. Gawsworth and Shiel became friends and in 1936 they became "blood brothers" by cutting their wrists and letting their blood intermingle. Thus, when Shiel died a few years after the war Gawsworth became "King Juan."

To try and perpetuate the fame of his friend, he created a "Redonda nobility" of people who did some service to Shiel's memory. Among the "dukes" and "duchesses" are Victor Gollancz, the publisher; J. B. Priestley, Rebecca West and Stephen (*Lifemanship*) Potter.

At the last "court," held recently in the lounge of a Ewell hotel, he created Robert Fabian—Fabian of the Yard—a "duke." Fabian was surprised. "All I ever did was to buy the 'king' a drink," he pointed out.

"Than which," replied Juan, "no greater service could there be. . . ."

But Gawsworth is no mere whimsical fellow; he has written and edited many books of poetry, and has won many awards for his work. Until recently was also editor of the *Poetry Review.* He has no time at all for the cliques that think all poems should be written in small letters without punctuation, and, frankly, neither have I. So let's have him in. Two minds who can agree on at least one thing are always welcome at *any* party!

JOAN GREENWOOD is next to John. First, because she spent one of the happiest holidays of her life at the Ferry Boat Inn a year or so ago and has wanted to go back ever since. This is her opportunity. And, secondly, because when someone asked her in January what was her big wish of the year, she was honest enough to answer : "I want a holiday."

Certainly Joan of the soft, flute-like voice, and the large appealing eyes, deserves one. Out of the 365 days last year, she worked on 361. She managed to get a short holiday in France this summer, but in Paris her identity was discovered and then, according to her mother, at least, who was with her, "There was hardly time to rest at all." So for a rest-deserving Joan (who also likes yoghourt, yachts and good conversation) a place at our (*Continued on page* 58)

TIME IS THE ART OF THE SWISS

"Happy Christmas—
with love—for a lifetime"

There are very, very few Christmas presents that will let you say that. That will be used every hour of every day of every year from now on.

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Your jeweller's knowledge is your safeguard

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table. We can surely guarantee her the first and the last but what a pity it's too cold for yachting, for the Helford river in spring is packed with sailing boats.

If we put Joan Greenwood next to Fred Bason they'll be bound to have lots to talk about, for Bason, who already has a collection of 11,168 autographs is quite likely to ask her to give him the 11,169th.

Fred has lived all his life in Walworth; he started his working days as a barber's lather boy, but tired of that and made his living from then on selling books from a barrow. When he bought an unusual book, maybe a first edition, he would write to its author, in this way came to know Arnold Bennett and Somerset Maugham.

Then he began to collect autographs from celebrities, and when they spoke to him he noted what they said. "Keep a diary," James Agate had told him once, "And one day it will keep you."

That day is not quite yet, but Fred Bason's *Second Diary*, out a week or so ago from Wingate, is doing very well, thank you, which is good news for author Fred. His first *Diary*, published two years ago, sold more than 8,000 copies—good going by any standards

Fred has the knack of coining aphorisms. Samples: "Luck is often what happens when preparation meets opportunity." "Happiness isn't everything in life—you can't buy money!" His fund of anecdotes about his experiences when autograph hunting is immense.

Once, in Southend, he saw a man he thought was a famous radio organist and at once asked him for his autograph. The man wrote: "Suffer little children to come unto me." A year or so later Bason saw the man's photograph in the papers. He was Alfred Arthur Rouse, hanged for the murder of an unknown man to whom he had given a lift in his car. . . .

Yes, Bason would be good company with his stories at our party. And we could turn the tables on the autograph king by making him sign copies of his new book for us. He would, too, and gladly.

NOW a place for David Williams, ex-Navy officer and an old friend of mine. Some time ago his wife, formerly the Czech actress Sylva Langova, wanted some furniture making for their flat in Chelsea. A friend suggested that a Czech refugee, one Gustav Bublik, could do the job, and so it turned out. Now, in Czechoslovakia Bublik used to own a huge wood-working factory which made, among other things, thousands of pairs of skis.

When Williams heard of this he recalled that this year sees the diamond jubilee of the British Ski Club—and also that no traditional wooden skis are made in Britain in any quantity. Right, said he, from now on that's changed; we're in the ski-making business. They were, too. Bublik made one pair as samples and Williams got a firm order for more from a West End store.

Now Williams and Bublik, plus three Czechs (a dentist, an ex-cavalry officer and a policeman) are hard at it every day in a small Soho workshop. Average output: ten pairs of skis every day.

There were lots of difficulties to overcome; language for one. But Williams beat them all—and still uses his wife as interpreter when things become too complicated for his pidgin-Czech!

So there are our guests, and the party is ready to begin. But first, do you notice something they all have in common? It is Character.

All are characters with strong views of their own who delight in expressing them. All have used their difficulties as stepping-stones to their goals. You may not always agree with what they say, but at least they *have* something to say!

A point to remember, surely, when the time comes to choose guests for *your* Christmas party.

END

Winter In The Country

(*Continued from page 22*)

as the first frail snowdrops in February, and the days are lengthening, you will see the lakes and the incomparable mountains better than in summer-time. The luxurious foliage of trees is a beautiful thing but sometimes it hides a distant scene. This most certainly applies in the Lake District. Along Buttermere and Crummock Water, and even more so along the shores of Lowes Water, Coniston and Windermere there are many trees. In winter-time you can see through their bare branches and obtain many a vista that is denied to you in high summer.

The same applies to Scotland—to the shores of Loch Lomond and some of the leafier glens where the road rides deep among the foliage and ferns. Glen Lyon is a case in point. Of all the glens in Scotland, this one, time and again in its great length, provides "windows" between the trees with breathtaking vistas of mountain, stream and woodlands. In winter-time you need not wait for the "windows." You can see through the trees, and thus your horizon is widened enormously.

TALKING of Scotland, have you ever realized that the west coast is one of the warmest parts of the British Isles in winter-time? True, it is also one of the wettest, but the breezes blowing in off the Atlantic are more often soft and warm rather than cold. Along the Road to the Isles from Fort William to Mallaig, there is an extensive tropical garden and woodland in a private estate, with palm trees and exotic flowers. It thrives in the mild climate (*Continued on page 60*)

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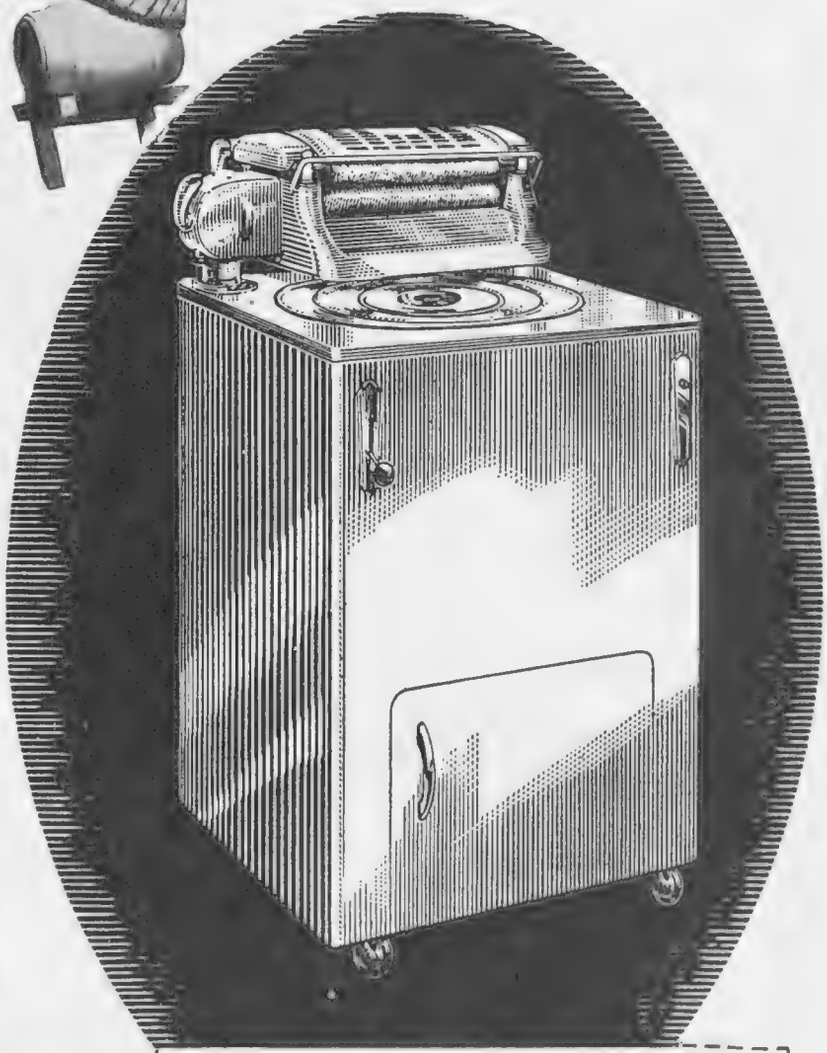

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there. There may be a lot of snow in Scotland but it is not often down on the west coast.

Last winter I made a long motor tour up the east coast of Scotland, through Aberdeen and round the coast via Fraserburgh to Banff and Buckie. Then I struck inland up Strath Spey to Aviemore and beyond, hoping to get some really wintry photographs. There was snow on the Cairngorms and the higher hills in the Strath, but nothing anywhere near the road.

There was rain and some incredibly warm sunshine.

Far from the weather being cold and wintry, I needed no extra clothing, not even a light coat, except to keep me dry, for days on end.

That was a wonderful trip and it made me realize again how pleasant the countryside can be in winter-time. I was motoring, it is true, in a new and luxuriously appointed car —a Standard Vanguard—but I also did a lot of walking, and scrambling up hillsides looking for good photographic vantage points.

I went on from Aviemore, past Loch Laggan and along Glen Spean to Spean Bridge—some grand wild scenery here. Then across the Caledonian Canal to the far side of the Great Glen and along to Fort William via Banavie. Ben Nevis was wreathed in wild storm clouds across the Glen, but they kept breaking, revealing great patches and beams of sunlight sweeping across the snowy wastes of the upper heights. It was worth going a long way to see that wonderful, colourful scene.

BUT Scotland is not the only part of the country to see in winter time. For my sins I live in London, when I am not travelling on some photographic expedition. Within thirty miles of Charing Cross there are unlimited walks in some of the loveliest country in all England. It is so easy to go out by train or bus into the heart of the country and do a nice day's walk. Here you will appreciate the beauties of winter time, as I have done on countless occasions, in the woods and fields of Surrey, Kent, Bucks and Essex. I have sat in the sunshine on a cold frosty day, sheltered from the wind, and felt the real heat of the sun as I ate my sandwich lunch.

There is plenty of wild life to be seen also in winter-time. Many birds stay with us throughout the winter and you will often find the woodlands and fields noisy with the calls of magpies, rooks, jays and jackdaws and the more delicate and varied calls of the numerous tomtits, with occasional bursts of song rom robin and wren. One delight of winter-time is the lack of crowds. You can motor for miles in comfort, for the roads away from towns will be remarkably free of traffic, with few exceptions.

When you go for walks you will not be forever bumping into holiday crowds and picnic parties. The field paths will be largely your own, but you will find a few other people who are not afraid of the winter and who find pleasure and delight in the countryside during the short days of the year.

The seaside, too, is often delightfully fresh, and frequently sunnier than inland. I once spent a wonderful Christmas week in Cornwall.

The rest of the country was smothered with choking fog, but out there the sun shone every day from a cloudless blue sky and I came back with quite a glow of sunburn, despite the time of year.

Yes, the winter is certainly a time to get out of doors, out into the country where all manner of interesting and beautiful things are to be seen, and you can experience little adventures that would be impossible at other times of the year.

END

Winter In The Country

To Confound The Wise (*Continued from page 41*)

ture," said the Vicar, and he put his hands on to Lenny's temples. "It's pretty hot, but anyway my hands may cool it," he said.

Lenny said it felt sort of soothing and he was better.

THEY were walking over to the Plough later, when suddenly he whipped off his dark glasses which he wore because he said people wouldn't like the look of sightless eyes.

"Vicar," he said, "I must be mad . . . because I think I'm seeing things!"

"What do you see?" asked the Vicar.

"I see people . . . and houses . . . and trees, and the Plough, and Alfred Goff standing at the door!" He was almost shouting in his excitement and when I heard him I couldn't believe it, but it was true!

Well, all the chaps came out of the bar, and crowded round and some of the visitors, too, to know what it was all about.

"I'm not kidding you . . . I tell you, I can *see*!" he kept repeating. And he could . . . though how or why had us puzzled, all right. I told them all to come in and have drinks all round on the house to celebrate. They were all standing round talking and drinking when suddenly Lenny put down his tankard.

"I've got it!" he exclaimed.

"Got what?" said one of the chaps.

"I've got what did it! It was the Vicar . . it was a miracle," he said.

Well, we all turned round to see what the Vicar had to say to that one, but he wasn't there.

He was over in the church.

FROM that day on, you never saw such a to do as there was; such arguments and such theories as everyone had about Lenny. The doctors from all over the place examined him to make him a test case . . . they argued this way and that . . . that he must have had a great shock and that that had restored his sight . . . that he could never have been really blind at all, not completely . . . and so on.

"I don't know about that," says Lenny. "All I know is that I couldn't see, and now I *can* see . . . and you said I never would," he added with a grin, "so what?"

So they tackled the Vicar. But they got no change there either.

"I'm not a medical man, so I can't attempt to understand these things from your angle, I'm afraid," he said apologetically. "And you might not be satisfied with the explanation I might hazard from *my* angle." He was dead right there, for when he *was* driven to give his view some thought he was a madman, or pretty eccentric anyway, to say the least. Others thought he was a liar.

WELL, the case stirred up a lot of interest as you can imagine, even before the newspapers got on to it. Various clever chaps, professors and such, would come down to pick the Vicar's brains. I was glad for his sake, for they'd stand him a meal at the Plough while they cross-questioned him, but I could see that he'd rather have been left alone. They wanted what they called a rational explanation, and to get it they'd ask him questions and then trip him up with his answers. You'd have thought he was a boy going through his exams. at school. Finally, they gave him up.

"He isn't talking the same language as us," they said. "He doesn't make sense."

The Vicar was relieved to have a little peace.

Then some psychic research people got at him. They wanted to prove that the miracle had come about through their sort of game. But he was a disappointment to them for he said he was very frightened of dabbling about in spooks and things. So they gave him up, too.

Lady Forrester was annoyed about the whole thing . . . she thought it was bad form and bad for the village, her butler told me.

"And why on earth did you have to choose that ne'er do well Roberts?" she asked indignantly.

"It *wasn't* I that chose him," the Vicar answered.

"Rubbish, my dear man . . . and what do you propose to do about his pension now? His poor sister won't even get *that* as soon as the War Office get to hear of it!"

BUT the newspapermen were the ones that did the Vicar real harm . . . and they nearly lost him for us.

One of them happened to be at the Plough a few days after Lenny got his sight, and he jumped at the story. As soon as the local papers got it the big dailies caught on and sent their reporters down from London to see the set-up as they called it.

My bar was full of them, when they weren't out tracking down information in the village. They tried Lenny at his cottage, but Agnes was all for sending them packing until one of them suggested that Lenny might make a tidy bit of money, selling the sole rights of his story. Then Agnes got a gleam in her eye, all right

"It would be only fair to me," she said. "Perhaps the Almighty has decided to reward me after all. He could repay the money I've spent." She meant that Lenny could . . . not the Almighty.

But the Vicar asked Lenny if he'd mind very much not putting his name to any story, because he didn't think he should cash in on a thing like a miracle. So Agnes had another grievance to chalk up against him, and you bet she did.

As a matter of fact the reporters hardly needed true stories, they made up so many tall ones themselves.

One, hearing that Lenny had been bathing in Huggett's pool the day he was healed, declared that the pool water must have special powers. In big headlines, it was. So Martin Huggett got together with Ernie Bosco, who runs charabancs, and they worked out a great scheme. The pool was to be railed. A tea house and changing cabins were to be built, like a Lido and Ernie was to run day trips for pilgrims . . . there and back and a meal thrown in.

"We might do a lunch at your place," says Ernie to me, "provided you make us a special price. What say?"

I said I'd wait and see.

Then there were reports that the Vicar had got some magic powers from a gypsy grandmother of his . . . although how they worked out that his poor old grannie had ever been a gypsy, beats me. She was a proper respectable old lady with white hair and a lace cap, very queenly she looked in the picture on the Vicar's mantelpiece.

It was all horrible for a shy chap like the Vicar, and he hated to see his name in headlines . . . specially when they called him Miracle Man or other soppy titles.

BUT the worst bad turn they did him was this . . . one reporter chap was in the bar one day, talking to me about this village . . . he wanted what he called the background. I told him what I thought he wanted . . . how there was a Roman encampment near, how old the church was and so on. And I happened to tell him how worried we'd been lest the parish be swallowed up in the Minster parish and we'd lose the Vicar.

At that he looked interested.

"He'd be very sorry to go, I suppose," he inquired.

"I think it would break him up," I said.

He thought a bit. Then he gave a laugh.

"And now all this excitement! Well, well!" (*Continued on page 62*)

Christmas Joys

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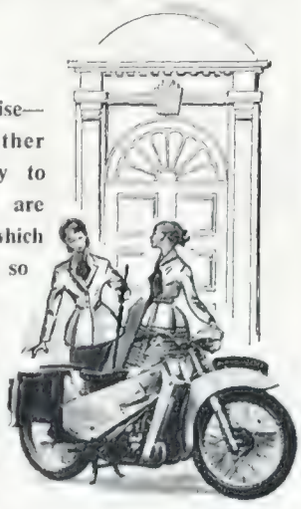

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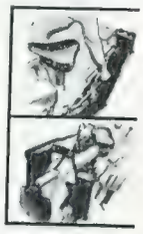

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I asked him what he meant, but he only winked and tapped the side of his nose in a knowing way.

"Never mind!" he said. "But full marks to the Vicar! He's a smart man!"

I didn't get his drift, and anyway I didn't like his manner so I ignored him.

BUT a few days later the Vicar called me in as I was passing his study window. He looked really worried and pointed to a newspaper article for me to read.

"The things they can impute," he said.

I was so angry when I read that article that I let out a string of oaths, and I wish the fellow could have been there to hear what I called him.

"Now Alfred," said the Vicar, "calm yourself. He can't be *all* of those things, really! But it *is* rather nasty, isn't it?"

The chap had written the story in such a way that it looked as if the whole of Lenny's cure was a stunt to pep up interest in our church and our Vicar himself. It was done so slyly that one couldn't exactly say he'd accused anyone of anything . . . but it started up nasty suspicions in people's minds I shouldn't wonder.

Of course there was the suggestion that Lenny hadn't really been stone blind . . . a neurotic type, they said, could imagine these things. They didn't bother to mention doctors or any opinions like that in their fairy tale. But there's something odd about a newspaper implying a thing . . . you can deny it but the slur remains.

"The Rural Dean will be very annoyed with me about this," said the Vicar sadly.

"Why with you?" I asked.

"The publicity and that sort of thing. I can't say that I blame him either. It is very undesirable . . . but the trouble is, I *don't* know what to do, except to wait patiently for it to die down."

A FEW days later, the Rural Dean paid him a visit. I was in the Vicarage garden with Lenny when he arrived, tying up the Michaelmas daisies against the wind. I told him the Vicar was out butterfly catching with some of the kids.

"Oh," says the Dean, "then I will wait."

It was a pity that he did, I felt, because the Vicar's arrival wasn't dignified as I could have wished for him.

He came bowling down the road in a cloud of dust, his alpaca coat flying and his butterfly net in the air, and all round him were the kids on bikes, doing Indian war cries and whoops. He jumped off at the gate and came down the garden with the children still making that awful din.

"How nice of you to come and see me," he said. "Children you must be quiet now, we're not Red Indians any longer." He asked me to take them in and give them lemonades.

"Perhaps you would like some, too?" he asked the Dean. "It's so very hot and dusty to-day."

But I could see from the Dean's face that it wasn't lemonade he was after, it was the Vicar's blood.

I'D have liked to have heard their conversation, but I hadn't a chance so I had to wait for what I could find out afterwards.

It seems that the Dean felt it his duty to write to the Bishop of the diocese, bringing to his notice the state of things, the publicity and such, and that as they'd always considered amalgamating us with Minster, now would be a good time to do it. Besides it was hardly worth the Vicar's stipend to keep him here seeing his congregation was so small . . . and he was sure the Bishop would agree.

"He said I had no right to do things like miracles without permission," said the Vicar ruefully. "When I pointed out that *I* didn't do it, that it was done *through* me, he wouldn't listen. I remember him as a boy . . . he was my prefect at school . . . never would listen to an explanation *then*, and he was always in the right."

I wasn't interested in Mr. Rural blinking Dean's schooldays. I was trying to think

To Confound The Wise

what we could do . . . and for the next few days all the village was thinking what we could do. And then the haymaking started, and everyone was busy and tired, and anyway nothing definite having been heard we began to think that perhaps it was all a scare. So we took the road of least resistance and did nothing . . . you know how it is. One is nervous of making too much of a fuss in case one makes a fool of oneself.

Well, that didn't satisfy the youngsters. They'd heard their parents talking and they were properly upset, and without letting on to anyone, they got together. Charlie Goddard was the leader, the nine-year-old kid I told you about. Well, Charlie wrote some sort of a letter. He told the Bishop it was a shame if the Vicar was sent away . . . "just because he did a miracle. Don't *you* believe in miracles?" he says in it. That's the way young Charlie had worked it out, you see. He told him that the kids round here couldn't get along without the Vicar. "We'll all go to the dogs," he said, having heard the expression. And he asked the Bishop not to let his parents or the Vicar know he'd written. Then he got all the kids to sign it and those that were too young to write had to make a mark. He addressed the letter to The Bishop, Oxenford, and expected to get an answer next day.

It seems that the Bishop was away at the time, so when there was no reply for some days Charlie sent a postcard as well, saying, "Dear Bishop, please *hurry*."

WHEN the Bishop got home and found this correspondence waiting for him, he must have been tickled by it, for he wrote back to Charlie saying he would come down and go into the whole matter of Charlie's grievance. He told him the train he was coming by and asked Charlie to meet him at the station.

So Charlie got the kids together and they met the Bishop when he arrived . . . young Iris and the lot of them, and the Bishop had a talk. Then he told them not to worry . . . he could see that they must never lose their Vicar.

"And now, I would like to go and see your friend," he said, "if you will conduct me there."

The Vicar was very surprised when he saw them.

"You have some very loyal parishioners," said the Bishop, smiling. "Do you mind if I give them some money to go and buy themselves ice cream while we have a chat?"

THE Vicar thought that he had come to break it to him gently that his day was over, but he couldn't understand why the Bishop had arrived in that way with all the children, too. However, he said it was very kind of the Bishop to come, and invited him into his study and prepared to hear the worst.

They talked a bit and the Vicar said he realized that in the eyes of many he had failed in his work . . . "and then the miracle and the publicity which followed," he said. "But I'm afraid that I can never pretend to regret the miracle . . . never . . . nor cease to wonder at being the instrument chosen. I was foolish, however, in the way I handled . . . or rather, *didn't* handle, the aftermath. I didn't know what to do."

The Bishop smiled.

"Perhaps if you had been worldly-wise you would not have been chosen," he replied. "Doesn't St. Paul say that God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise? I think that I must try to remember that when I'm inclined to become pompous . . . perhaps the Rural Dean had better remember it, too."

The Bishop comes down to see the Vicar quite a lot, nowadays. He says it freshens him up.

And we're right back to normal again . . . nothing happening . . . no more miracles . . . not yet, anyway.

END

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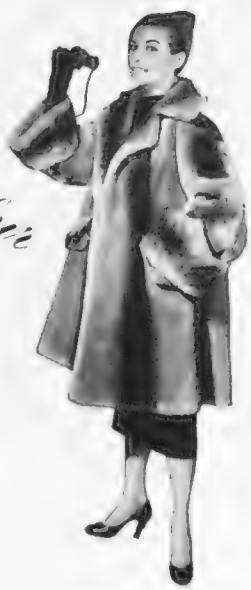

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You Should Believe In Christmas

(Continued from page 27)

December 17 and lasted for seven days. During this time it was ruled that: "All men shall be equal . . . .All business, be it public or private, is forbidden, save such as tends to sport, solace and delight."

The Kalends, or New Year celebration, was a three-day festival, beginning January 1. Tremendous feasting and merrymaking went on, with an extravagant exchange of gifts, and with all houses decorated with lights and greenery.

The centuries passed. The church continued its regular denunciation of the Christian weakness for pagan amusements. But there was so much that was rooted in mankind's primordial memory. The practice of Christmas feasting linked with the time when there was a great sacrifice and slaughter of herds which could not be fed during the winter months. The popular mumming and masquing; this was a throwback to the Kalends, to the days when men dressed in the skin of animals because they believed animals to be possessed of sacred power. The use of evergreens dated back to those days when the gods of vegetation must be appeased. And the Yule log, superstitiously lit with last year's brand to bring good luck to the household—surely this was in part a symbolic re-kindling of the sun's light. And hardest of all to erase was man's natural propensity for enjoying himself.

* * *

Gradually the Church accepted the intelligent solution of absorbing what it could not destroy. Christian symbolism was slowly superimposed upon most of the heathenish practices, so that it became difficult to tell where one had begun and the other left off.

By medieval times the Christmas which finally emerged had borrowed the best elements of both sides. It possessed the human warmth, the natural joy in living which should be the birthright of every living creature and it had brought a special sanctity and sweetness to the story of the Heavenly Child.

Religion had come to be a very real and natural part of people's lives in those times. The baby Jesus was a warm, living child, to be protected from the cold, to be loved and cherished. The shepherds were lusty, down-to-earth human beings, reacting to the divine revelations with good-natured humour and simple awe. This atmosphere is perfectly captured in the famous medieval plays. The shepherds joking and talking among themselves before the appearance of the angels. And when they finally discover the Holy Family in the manger, the first shepherd cries:

"Heare I see Marye,
And Jesus Christe faste by,
Lapped in haye."

Joseph is rather irreverently described as "an old man with a pound of heare about his mouth and more." And the shepherds gifts are all strictly practical: a bell, a flask, a spoon to eat pottage with and a cape.

With the arrival of Cromwell and the Protestant Reformation, Christmas once more got into trouble. It was the old problem: people enjoyed it too much. In 1644 an Ordinance was issued to promote better observance of the Feast of the Nativity. The Feast was to become a Fast. The populace must contemplate its sins.

But the English people were not so easily discouraged, and in spite of further restrictions Christmas continued to rear its holly-decked head. In 1647 the Lord Mayor and the City Marshal had the uncomfortable task of setting fire to the evergreens with which London was rebelliously decked. With the Restoration, Christmas came back into its own, although it never quite regained its former exuberance.

It was not until Victorian times that the Christmas tree arrived from Germany, adding its own special splendour to the English Yuletide. Its origins are plainly linked with the sacraments of the vegetation spirit, with the evergreens used during the Roman Kalends.

The decorations with which the tree is traditionally hung are probably connected with the widespread belief that many trees blossomed and bore fruit at Christmastide—a belief widespread through the English country. For example, in 1752 the people of Quainton, Bucks, were very much disturbed by the New Style Calendar which made Christmas fall twelve days earlier than usual. In a body, they visited the local hawthorn which always blossomed most reliably on Christmas Eve. Finding no buds they firmly resolved that the new Christmas was wrong and could not be kept.

Santa Claus is also a relatively recent addition to the English Christmas although he has been turning up in Europe for centuries in a variety of shapes; bringing gifts to children who are good, and sometimes punishment to children who are bad. And there are all the other half-forgotten ingredients of Christmas; the Feast of Fools, the Wassail bowl, Martinmas, that great company of legendary angels and dark spirits, crowding into the memory of man on Christmas Eve.

This then is Christmas—the rich and ancient festival which links the centuries of human progress as no other has ever done. Time has blended even the contradictions of its origins: the rebirth of the sun, the return of life, welcomed in the lusty spirit of carnival—and the birth of the Child who symbolizes the profound poetry of human hope.

We cannot afford to be disgruntled with Christmas, to measure its success by our pocket books rather than our hearts. Christmas belongs to us. It belongs to everyone who is capable of accepting its much needed and joyous message—*peace on earth, goodwill to men.*

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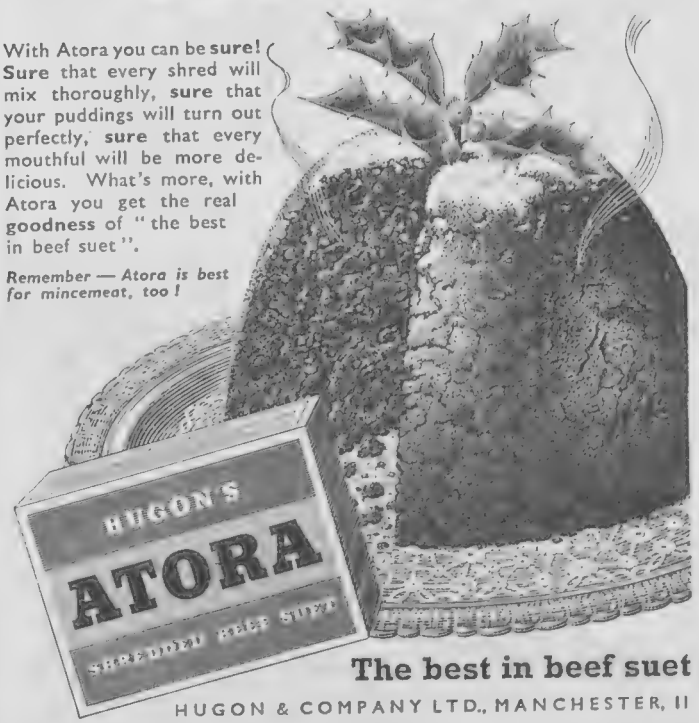

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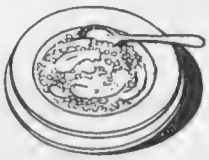

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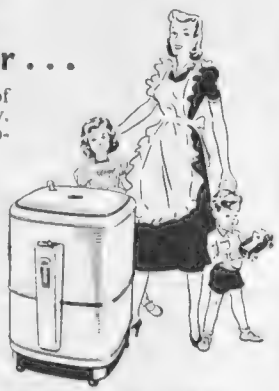

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Gadgets Galore

(*Continued from page* 52)

Such basic pieces of equipment are more or less the same for anyone—the choice of gadgets will depend more on the type of cooking the individual cook goes in for and the sort of food her family enjoys. A cake-maker, for instance, has her special needs over and above the few cake tins and the wire cooling tray that are all that once-in-a-while cake-baking demands. There are those useful sandwich tins with a small rotating "lifter" that means that no cake need ever stick to the pan, there is a turntable for icing, an icing syringe and nozzles, a wide variety of patty pans and a really good egg whisk—there is one superlative one that will beat up egg-whites in a matter of seconds. There is, even, an electric mixer.

SUCH a major purchase may well give the most headlong gadgeteer pause but I think that for a large family where there are a great many cakes and puddings to be made it is probably worth while. For the smaller household the judicious outlay of a few pounds—a a fraction of the cost of a mixer—on a first-rate equipment—a coffee mill, an egg whisk, a juice extractor, a vegetable mill and so on seems to me the wiser course. What about pressure cookers? Again, this is largely a question of individual needs and temperaments. I am not by temperament a pressure cook myself. I like to sniff, to sip, to stir, to hover while the cooking is going on. But I like too the cosy little noise of a pressure cooker cooking—like the breathing of a contented but asthmatic kitten and to me it is invaluable for all sorts of our favourite dishes—chilli con carne, jugged hare, boiled beef or bacon, chestnut purée, and those lovely thick pea and lentil soups that one used to have to plan for the day beforehand. And then there is their special usefulness for bottling, for sterilizing baby's bottles; they are undoubtedly, I think, a worthwhile investment for any household where time is precious and meals have to be prepared in a hurry—and that's nearly every household to-day. There are gadgets I really abominate—those egg poachers that turn out horrid, tidy little steamed egg buns, those mayonnaise mixers that are slower and less satisfactory than a bowl and a wooden spoon, but, on the other hand, I must admit that there are gadgets for which I have a sneaking, an inordinate affection—a grapefruit knife with a curved blade with a serrated edge, those little sharp-edged scoops for making melon or potato balls, those rubber-bladed mixing-bowl-scrapers (ideal when making gravy in the baking tin), a wire hardboiled egg slicer, a gadget for holding eggs upright while boiling that saves many cracks. And, lastly, there are all those useful, invaluable things that are not exactly gadgets but don't quite come under any other heading either—face tissues for skimming the fat off soups and sauces, rubber bands, glass saucepan lids, a pressure cooker clock-timer, a hardworking nylon nailbrush, a formica chopping board that's cutproof, burnproof and stainproof, a rubber ice cube tray that releases the ice cubes willingly, squares of butter muslin, rolls of greaseproof paper or foil, plastic skin bags—which I steam puddings in—and something that's quite surprisingly useful—an old tea cosy.

END

The Feast And After

(*Continued on page* 37)

As for vegetables, I prefer potato straws, accompanied by cauliflower. But don't, I beg you, overcook the cauliflower. Let the little white flowerets be just cooked, not soggy and waterlogged. Toss them in butter only. For this occasion, at least, forget that such a thing as white sauce exists, and let the cauliflower be seen in all its beauty, not masked with viscous white paste, but just glistening with the melted butter which drops from it in golden beads.

A little sharp salad of watercress, chopped onion and green stuffed olives is stimulating and colourful. Serve it on individual plates. It will add zest to the cooked food.

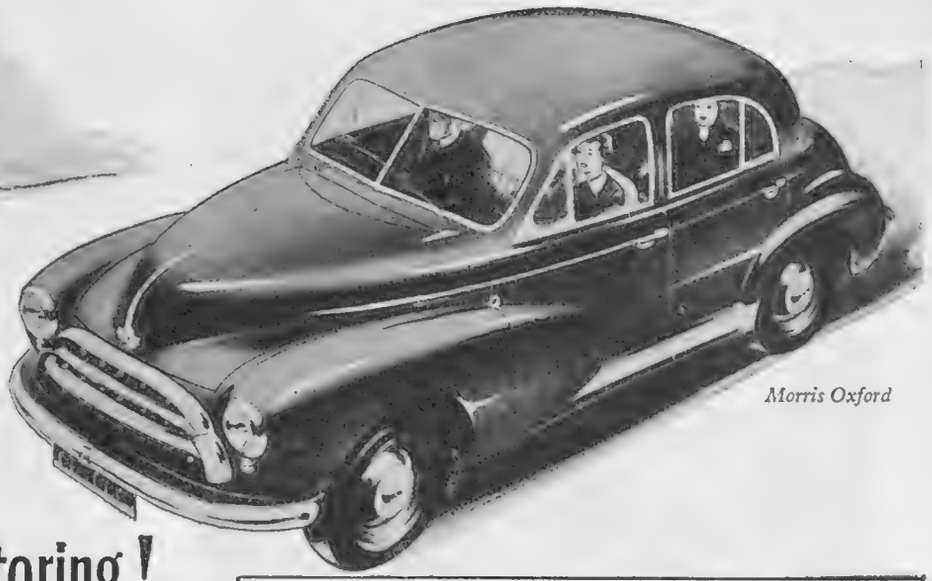
Grapefruit or melon seem to me to be the perfect opening for a meal of this kind. Cream soup is obviously too heavy, and even clear soup would cloud the taste of the following bird, in my opinion. But this, of course, is a matter for individual choice. There is a school of thought which considers no meal complete without a soupy beginning.

The Christmas pudding, nicely matured by its month-long rest, will need another three hours steaming on the day, while the mince-pies to follow (with a wish for the first one eaten!) are, I think, best if the lower pastry is shortcrust and the top layer flaky.

The king of all cheese and the most specially appropriate to Christmas is, of course, Stilton, which is fortunately available again so shall we complete the feast with cheese, biscuits and crisp white sticks of celery.

In a rosy haze of gratitude and memory, I recall an occasion, many years ago, when I spent Christmas away from home—in a Canterbury hotel, to be precise. Mournfully I entered the dining-hall; but as the meal proceeded through its appointed and perfect order I naturally became more cheerful, until for me the apotheosis was reached by the ceremony of the cheese. Slowly, in stately procession, the waiters moved towards the long table. The *maître d'hôtel*, a large and corpulent man, with an acre of white shirt front preceding him, came first. Behind him two younger, slimmer waiters carried between them a large silver tray on which reposed a giant, a very emperor of Stilton cheeses. Another large waiter followed, bearing a silver scoop. The *maître d'hôtel* (*Continued on page* 68)

Morris Minor Saloon



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murmured: "Cheese?" I nodded, bereft alike by food and emotion of speech, whereupon the rearguard waiter moved two paces forward, scooped a portion from the centre of the cheese, and deposited it on my plate. The showmanship—the production, as it were—was spectacular enough, but that first mouthful . . . ah!

Afterwards I asked the head waiter what it was that had improved upon perfection. He beamed at me approvingly, and told me that a week before the performance a cross had been cut in the centre of the cheese with a silver knife, and into the incision had been poured half a pint of good old ale. In my modest way, I have repeated that performance ever since. I recommend you to try it.

Now the shape of the feast is clear. We can adorn it with a few trimmings—a dish or so of salted almonds, not bought at so much per fine ounce, but freshly made as follows: blanch the nuts and dry them thoroughly. For each cupful place about a tablespoonful of olive oil in a frying-pan and heat gently. Place the nuts evenly over the surface of the pan. Then fry slowly, stirring, until they are delicately golden. Remove from the pan and drain; then while hot sprinkle them with table salt, and spread out to cool and crisp.

You can make spiced nuts, too, by adding a little mixed spice to the salt before sprinkling. More trimmings—crystallized ginger; almonds and raisins (if you're lucky enough to get some raisins); olives, both black and green; potato crisps. Small dishes dotted here and there on the table, containing oddments; zest-revivers to fill those corners in our appetites which the solid food hasn't reached. And finally, when the candles burn low, and the blazing log on the hearth throws long shadows on the darkening walls, we will drink our good coffee and accompany it with a mellow and mellowing port or brandy. A time for good conversation. A time, too, for reflective silences.

A merry Christmas to you all.

END

Penny Plain—Tuppence Coloured

(*Continued from page* 34)

wobbling by the producer and his colleagues, always in a state of excited complication in the wings. But there was sometimes the explosion at the end to lift up one's sagging spirits. "The Miller And His Men," a classic Toy Theatre piece, was rounded off with a most magnificent detonation, brought about by banging trays, igniting red fire in a saucer, and a quick change of scene.

However, some disagreed about the dullness of the performance, and there is a charming story of the brother of a well-known actor in the twenties who would give grand and highly dangerous shows in a tiny room crowded to overflowing with his theatre friends. Here he would reveal in progressive scenes, mounting to a glorious climax, a series of splendidly elaborate tableaux, each lit by three or four candles placed in the wings. He declaimed grandiloquently every part himself between long draughts of bottled beer, whilst his sister banged out triumphant music on the piano. It was a wonder the room didn't catch on fire.

THE shops which sold Toy Theatre sheets were situated near the great theatres of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, in the Minories by the Tower, at Islington and Hoxton. It was at Hoxton that Benjamin Pollock kept his shop. As a youth of twenty he had married the daughter of the great Redington, an early publisher of Toy Theatre sheets, and inherited his business. Pollock and Webb between them kept the flag of the juvenile drama flying when all others had left the field during the trade's decline towards the close of the century.

Poor Webb. For years he suffered because of a fierce quarrel with Robert Louis Stevenson who, after getting him to supply many prints to illustrate the article he was writing on the Toy Theatre, refused to pay him for his work, remarking that the publicity was reward enough. A tremendous row culminated with Stevenson stalking from the shop saying: "This is going to cost you something, Mr. Webb, this is going to cost you a great deal." And it did, for Stevenson in his famous and very beautiful essay sang the praises of Pollock and never mentioned Webb who, as a result, has been forgotten.

IT is an odd fact that, in spite of its tremendous popularity, none of the Toy Theatre publishers made their fortune. Skelt, the most prolific of them all, drank heavily and died in Stepney Workhouse: and West, another great figure, was seen at the end of his life walking the streets of London in a state of wretchedness. They were artists, and perhaps because of that were erratic men of business.

Aubrey Beardsley, G. K. Chesterton, Sir Charles Cochran and Orson Welles have all been ardent Toy Theatre fans. Yet it is a sad thought that this enchanting pastime, once the joy of every child in the kingdom, is now known only to the few enthusiasts who love it for its quaintness, its theatricality and its nostalgic memories of a vanished age.

But Toy Theatres, with sheets of characters and scenes, can still be bought in London. New prints and new plays, issued under the name of Pollock, are being prepared with the help of distinguished contemporary artists, notably J. B. Priestley and Doris Zinkeisen; and if this indoor game can be revived it will provide an interesting challenge to the ubiquitous television. Sir Ralph Richardson, who played the part of a horse in a recent Toy Theatre Production, and is one of its most famous patrons, has said: "The Toy Theatre is more than a delightful entertainment: it teaches children to paint, to draw, to use their hands and, most of all, to exercise their imagination." Can watching television do this?

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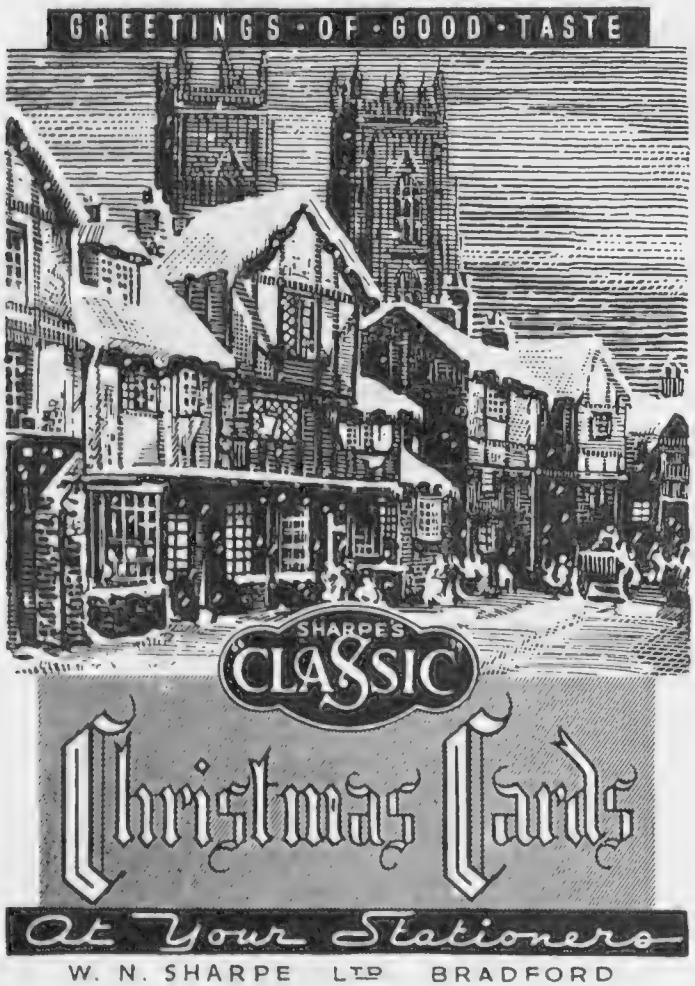

Three Men And Music

(*Continued from page 29*)

these were mere spare-time sketches in the margin of the career of Arthur Sullivan, Mus. Doc., as he and his public saw it unfolding—the career of England's leading *serious* composer. Solemn, pretentious oratorios flowed from his pen; his ultimate ideal was *grand* opera; his fiancée dared to compare him with Bach. He was to be the English Bach. Already he was the bard of the people and the friend of royalty; as such he was expected to turn out pompous music for great occasions.

D'Oyly Carte saw through all this. He saw the real gold in Sullivan: not the English Bach, but the English Offenbach.

When Sullivan went into the Royalty Theatre in Soho and raised his baton on the opening night of *Trial By Jury* it caused something more than a sensation, not only because this opera is a little gem, but because the presence in front of the footlights of a musician of Sullivan's eminence had a profound effect on the attitude of the Victorian upper and middle classes.

As, year by year, opera followed opera, it became respectable to go to the theatre. The stuffiness of Victorian England was ventilated by gusts of Gilbertian fresh air.

The revolution had wider effects. The artistry with which the operas were mounted influenced fashion and good taste outside the theatre, while the highly polished musical performance which Sullivan insisted upon had an improving effect on standards of presentation everywhere.

But the chief architect of the revolution was Gilbert, for he was producer as well as writer of the libretti, and he happened to be a born disciplinarian. Which was exactly what was needed. It was Gilbert who had to clean out the stables, to establish a new standard of performance and obedience. One day at rehearsal he sternly checked an actress for deviations from the Gilbertian script.

"Mr. Gilbert, sir," she protested, "I know my lines."

"Perhaps, ma'am," Gilbert replied, "but do you know mine?"

D'Oyly Carte held his partners more or less together for the best part of twenty years. With all his tact he did not always succeed; there were quarrels and reconciliations. But the more one studies Sullivan and Gilbert the more one marvels that two men of such opposite temperaments could work together so long and so well.

Many books have been written about these two men, and now there is a film, but Gilbert, always economical in the use of words, really put the whole of the contrast between himself and Sullivan into a nutshell when he said: "My cook gets £80 a year and gives me a kipper. Sullivan's cook gets £500 a year for giving him the same thing in French."

END

Good King Wenceslas

(*Continued from page 20*)

his place furnished with no drinking horns, no deep-troughed platter amid the welter of rich table accoutrements. For several years Wenceslas had practised asceticism and this was token of Boleslav's entire respect. He must have been a happy prince that night as he sat with this brother amid the feasting, talking of those old days at Tetin and discussing the programme for the morrow's solemn celebration at the church.

The next day, September 28, Wenceslas rose very early, as was his wont, and prayed with his chaplain and his inseparable companion, Podivin. Then, without breaking his fast, he began his ceremonial ride to the church, where he would hear special Mass before the celebrations began in earnest. The road passed through one of those pine forests so common in the neighbourhood of Prague. The little cavalcade rounded a gentle bend in the road and came in full view of the church. From the shadow of the last group of trees there suddenly thundered a force of about thirty armed cavaliers, bearing relentlessly down on the greatly inferior band on the road, making especially for Wenceslas himself. Though Wenceslas and all his men fought bravely, the issue was never in doubt. Wenceslas was cut to pieces.

Boleslav, now ruling prince of Bohemia, had his saintly brother buried without ceremony on his estate. He now set about his ambitious schemes of Bohemian aggrandisement. Surnamed "The Cruel," he spared nothing and no one to attain his ends. They say he never slept. Without doubt the awful fratricide gnawed endlessly at his conscience.

Three years the nightmare mood lasted. Then came the hysterical climax of remorse and the scream of repentance. Amid tremendous enthusiasm and accompanied by a succession of wayside miracles, the coffin of Wenceslas was conveyed to an open space in Prague and there, before a transfixed populace, buried.

Above that tomb in Prague is now our famous cathedral of St. Vitus and St. Wenceslas, and in the square nearby is the famous equestrian statue. That is the story, part history, part legend, of the man you call Good King Wenceslas; and where your Rev. Neale got his own little story goodness knows.

Certainly the answer is hard to come by. No standard encyclopaedia nor dictionary, no anthology of hymns and their authors, so much as mentions the mystery. The key may lie with Dubrovious, a Moravian bishop of the sixteenth century, who wrote a history of Bohemia in Latin. Here is the story of the "heated sod" almost as it was adapted by Neale. Almost, but not quite. The "page" of the carol is, in Dubrovious, Podivin, above-mentioned, described as "intimate friend and constant companion." And St. Agnes' Fountain—there comes the human touch. Dubrovius makes no mention of such a fountain. But Neale had a small daughter whom he loved dearly. Her name was Agnes.

END

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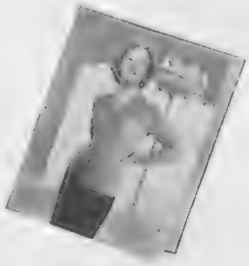

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The Christmas Tree (*Continued from page 12*)

and there's nothing you can do about it. And I must explain to Liz why I've got to let her down, because it's better that a decent child should be cheated than that a sneak-thief should be shown up."

"I can only offer to speak to her myself, and take my share of the blame. May I?"

The Colonel blinked. "D'you mean that?"

"I must. Without sermonizing."

"Well, now's your chance."

A hundred yards down the road Elizabeth came round the corner on a bicycle, red-cheeked, her red muffler streaming behind her.

"Why didn't you wait for me, Grandad?" she said. "Oh, good morning Mr. Pevensey."

"The vicar wants to explain about your tree, Liz."

"Syd Gittins stole it. I asked old Tom and he guessed. There is Syd!"

Before the Colonel could stop her she was pedalling hard up the road shouting: "Syd, Syd," to a man in dyed battle-dress with a lurcher at heel.

"Perhaps she can deal with it better than either of us," the vicar said.

Elizabeth and Syd looked friendly enough. He opened his cottage gate for her. The lurcher sat down to guard her bicycle. The Colonel took out his cigarette case and offered it to the vicar, for the first time in five years. The vicar hesitated, took one, and lit the Colonel's before he lit his own. It was the first time he had smoked a cigarette out of doors, since he arrived in the village.

"I'd always found Syd Gittins so trustworthy," he said.

"P'raps this isn't a bad time of year to find him out." The Colonel, relieved at not having to explain too much to Elizabeth, was prepared to make allowances for anything.

The two men fell silent, embarrassed, but there was no hostility between them.

Presently Elizabeth came out of the cottage with Syd talking fast and flapping his hands as he followed her. She left him and began to push her bicycle towards them. Under her other arm was a small box. The Colonel began to chuckle. "By gad, she's done a deal with him."

Elizabeth arrived in triumph.

"Well Liz?"

"You won't send Syd to prison, will you, Grandad?"

"No, not at Christmas."

"Because I promised him I'd ask you not to, and he gave me a ferret. A doe. I can mate her with Paul Temple. Look."

She gave her bicycle to the vicar to hold and opened the lid of the box a little.

"I like the look of her," the Colonel said, avoiding any comment on Elizabeth's deal.

"Look," she said and held up the box to the vicar.

The vicar looked thoughtful. "Most extraordinary," he said, "the markings look very familiar. I provided a ferret with markings very like that for Gittins to get the rabbits out of my orchard. The creature escaped. Gittins dug for a couple of hours, but we never found it." He began to laugh.

"I told you Liz'd deal with him."

"A most immoral solution. And I'm afraid I've scored. I don't think that ferret cost me as much as I saved on the tree."

Elizabeth looked puzzled. "I was right to tell Syd you wouldn't send him to prison, wasn't I, Grandad?"

"The vicar's coming home with us for his morning coffee, I hope. You can ask him about that as we go along."

The vicar pushed her bicycle. The Colonel carried her ferret. Elizabeth walked between them giving a hand to each. The vicar prepared himself humbly to explain to Elizabeth. He was grateful for the Colonel's gesture of goodwill. He looked down to see whether Elizabeth was ready, but her gaze was far away across the fields. She had forgotten about the problem of Syd. Feeling him look at her she turned up her face with a happy, innocent smile.

"D'you see them over there?" she said. "Our first lambs."

END

The Days Before Trial (*Continued from page 13*)

choice. Most killings are sordid or insignificant affairs and quickly fade. It is useless for me to select one such. For the viewing of French justice in adequate unfolding detail, our crime must belong to the minority—the arresting kind which mobilizes "the forces of justice," otherwise the police, from the start.

I mentioned overlapping.

The local gendarmerie, which is part of the armed services, starts the ball rolling by carrying out a preliminary search and detaining suspects for questioning. You would think they know the "locals," and their dialect, but that is not necessarily the case.

So the gendarmerie is usually joined by representatives of the State Police from the nearest headquarters (at any rate in a sensational inquiry) and by a jeep-borne patrol of Mobile Guards a tough, militarized police force stationed all over France. That makes three varieties of police already on the job.

After the lapse of a few hours, at most a full day, the head of the local gendarmerie notifies the Parquet, a remarkable all-French institution.

The Parquet takes the place both of the coroner's court and police court proceedings before a magistrate. It also shoulders something of what falls to "the man in charge" from Scotland Yard. When a case is taken over by a Parquet magistrate, all the mechanics of investigation are executed on his authority. He can pick out and examine what witnesses he chooses, order the presence of experts, call for autopsies, halt the inquiry, restart it, summon outside assistance.

At any point the Parquet can tell the police: "You are getting nowhere with that witness. Start looking somewhere else." It can order this or that police force to drop out temporarily and hand over to a rival.

ACE crime reporters in France have great latitude owing to laxity in the libel laws and—more so—to the notorious "guilty until proved innocent" clause which presses so heavily on charged persons and also on suspects not yet charged. It means that high-powered newshawks can start hares with impunity, supposing this and deducing the other, engaging in stunts and fantasies which would land them in jail in double quick time elsewhere.

Well, our particular murder has bogged down, so the magistrate orders "an investigation of homicide against X. . . ." At this stage (when not earlier) the expert help of trained detectives is needed, and the French equivalent of Scotland Yard is called in—the Sûreté. This force of ten thousand plain-clothes men has flying squads stationed throughout the country at regional capitals.

The political police may also take part in a murder investigation, as the following memorable report testifies:

"Two of France's seven police forces became mutually jealous at a Strasbourg round-up of gangsters and opened fire on one another. France's leading lawyer, Maître Garcon, said at a subsequent inquiry: 'The criminal police got a little excited and started the firing.'" (These were the repressive police. Their opponents were the political police.)

If Sûreté arrangements were perfect, five inspectors would now be doing their stuff: No. 1, putting a cordon round the scene and keeping a strict watch; No. 2, examining the corpse; No. 3, minutely scrutinizing everything else, *à la* Holmes; No. 4, questioning those who had been in contact with the victim; No. 5, the chief inspector, receiving all reports and directing further work.

But the Sûreté can't run to all that in these impoverished (?) times, so usually the chief inspector tackles the lot at the head of two or three junior colleagues.

ANOTHER Sûreté speciality is reconstructing the crime. For this, a suspect is brought in contact with the body and compelled to witness a re-enactment of the murder on the very spot where it was committed. He or she says enough to warrant the formulation of a definite charge, and so is clapped into jail.

The same course will be followed if accumulated evidence is considered sufficient without a suspect obliging. This is what happened with Marie Besnard, whose case provides a suitable illustration of the next phase of the guillotine in slow motion.

Had she confessed, Mme. Besnard would have been dealt with long ago—she was arrested in May, 1949. Instead, she was removed in that year to Poitiers Prison, where she has been ever since, at the beck and call of the juge d'instruction placed in charge of her case. A more highly qualified version of the Parquet magistrate, he can summon an accused person for further questioning whenever he chooses. Sometimes months elapse between questionings.

The Besnard case has been especially drawn out. The accused was placed on trial last spring—only for the Prosecution to have to admit that vital medical evidence concerning the remains had been botched. So a fresh trial is about to begin.

Here we encounter the total absence of *Habeas Corpus*, which Maître Garcon is valiantly trying to remedy. Everyone knows that torture has been re-introduced. French citizens are kept for months and even years in prison without trial. They are subjected to the same régime in prison as individuals who have been convicted, but if found to be innocent either before or during trial, have no claim to compensation from the State. The magnitude of this sad survival will be clear when I add that one-third of France's prison population is made up of persons awaiting trial.

AT last—the Assizes! Three black-robed and black-capped judges and a jury of nine. But it is the Public Prosecutor who draws the limelight.

A judgment of guilty can go for appeal, and the Appeal Court ruling can be further fought before the Court of Cassation—literally a "breaking-down court" and the highest tribunal in the land. Prisoners may not appear before it, and usually its proceedings are concerned with legal interpretations of the Penal Code, still as laid down by Napoleon.

But for some the guillotine draws nearer every day. Yet, even here, there is the same tendency to drag out things, as earlier. Several months may elapse between a condemned man's last hope vanishing, and his head being pushed under the poised knife. On that fatal dawn it may be all of three years since he saw the outside of prison walls. So it was with Bluebeard Landru.

But when the guillotine did function outside Versailles Prison that cold, damp, misty February morning, there was nothing "slow-motion" about it. One barely had time to county forty—like seconds—before the whole thing was over.

To-day the public can no longer see anything unless they can see into prison courtyards, and they have only about thirty opportunities a year to do that, as the guillotine travels the country.

The public guillotine went out with an air in 1945, when it decapitated Dr. Petiot outside the Santé Prison, Paris. He had murdered thirty-seven persons during the Occupation and the shouts of execration that arose from the crowd were in fitting harmony with the cries and jeers which had marked the initial falling of the knife on the Place de Grève (Concorde) 157 years before.

END

On The Straight

(*Continued from page 45*)

k. 4, p. 3 tog., k. 4, w.fd.; rep. from * to last 7, k. 7.

4th row.—K. 5, p. to last 5, k. 5.

5th row.—K. 6, * k. 2, w.fd., k. 3, p. 3 tog., k. 3, w.fd., k. 1 ; rep. from * to last 7, k. 7.

6th row.—K. 5, p. to last 5, k. 5.

7th row.—K. 6, k. 2 tog., * w.fd., k. 1, w.fd., k. 2, p. 3 tog., k. 2, w.fd., k. 1, w.fd., sl. 1, k. 2 tog., p.s.s.o. ; rep. from * to last 17, w.fd., k. 1, w.fd., k. 2, p. 3 tog., k. 2, w.fd., k. 1, w.fd., sl. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o., k. 6.

8th row.—K. 5, p. to last 5, k. 5.

9th row.—K. 6, * k. 4, w.fd., k. 1, p. 3 tog., k. 1, w.fd., k. 3 ; rep. from * to last 7, k. 7.

10th row.—K. 5, p. to last 5, k. 5.

11th row.—K. 6, * k. 1, w.fd., sl. 1, k. 2 tog., p.s.s.o., w.fd., k. 1, wool twice round needle, p. 3 tog., leave wool in front, k. 1, w.fd., sl. 1, k. 2 tog., p.s.s.o., w.fd. ; rep. from * to last 7, k. 7.

12th row.—K. 5, p. to last 5, k. 5.

To complete the bed-wrap in fan stitch, continue in patt. until work measures approximately 61 ins., finishing on a 2nd row of patt. Then dec. to 74 sts. thus : k. 1 dec. k. 1 (dec.) 70 times, k. 1. Work second cuff in rib to match first.

TRELLIS STITCH

Follow general directions for bed-wrap until ribbed cuff is complete and there are 147 sts. on needle. Then:

1st row.—K. 6, * m. 1, k. 2 ; rep. from * to last 5, k. 5.

2nd row.—K. 5, p. 1, * p. 3, sl. the first of these 3 sts. over the other 2 ; rep. from * to last 5, k. 5.

3rd row.—K. 5, * k. 2, m. 1 ; rep. from * to last 6, k. 6.

4th row.—K. 5, * p. 3, sl. the first of these 3 sts. over the other 2 ; rep. from * to last 6, p. 1, k. 5.

Dec. to 74 sts. and work second cuff to match first.

END

Way Of Life

(*Continued from page 24*)

the way he always is—so kind and sweet and amusing. If I didn't love him so much do you think I'd care how many women he married."

"Don't exaggerate, pet. For a widower of over twenty years standing, to marry once again at the age of fifty is not evidence of polygamy. Let's drink to his way of life." He got up and poured the sherries and brought her one.

"You don't really mind at all, do you, Larry?"

There was quite a long pause before he answered and he spoke slowly. "Listen, Trudy. Joy Martin—who is by now presumably the second Lady Quayle—will fly back with her new husband from Paris and be here to-morrow. I have always believed that the lady who pays for the music can decide whether she wants a samba or a saraband. That's how it's going to be here. No friction. Whatever she says goes. The marriage must be a success. It's our job to make him feel good, to persuade him that he did the right thing, that he's making us all happy. Understand?"

"All right Larry."

HE had gone away then to change, to dine with friends, to go to the opera after which they would find some supper place where they could dance. It was part of the pattern of his days, part of the way of living which Sir Edward wished to preserve for himself and Larry.

The house had always been gay, thought Trudy, as she sat on at the big desk, staring at nothing, trying to get used to the idea of Sir Edward's second marriage. It had been a casual gaiety. People had come and gone, pleasant, witty people, invited often on the spur of the moment, a hospitality that was informal, warm and affectionate. Sir Edward loved people and he had been born among "the right people."

"Why not?" Larry would argue. "We're a vanishing race. People will not look upon our like again. We're the last of the pleasure seekers. Trudy thinks we've obligations to the community."

Sir Edward would smile at her lovingly. "Dear Trudy, I expect she's right. At the moment we also have a huge obligation to Harrods."

"Trudy is right." Sir Edward always spiked her guns by agreeing with her. "She's too good for us. I don't know why she stays."

"I stay because I love you both."

"And we love you." They would laugh warmheartedly, they would toast one another in the last of the old sherry.

Those happy days were over. Now everything would change. Now they must get ready to meet the woman who was going to pay the piper and call the tune.

There was a day of feverish preparation. A sense of strain, already a nostalgia for the past. Larry nervous, aloof, avoiding Trudy's grief-stricken eyes.

IT was shortly after six when the car arrived that evening. The staff, as rehearsed, led by Mr. and Mrs. Skeat, were gathered in the hall to greet the new Lady Quayle. Most of them had spent their lives in the service of Sir Edward. Their wages had been paid sooner or later—very often later—but like Trudy they had felt that they were part of the family. They had been happy. People loved Sir Edward. His staff were no exceptions. (*Continued on page 74*)

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She might have been anything in her early thirties, with neat features, perfect figure, and the bright brown eyes of a bird. No—of a monkey. Not one of those sad little monkeys that always seemed to be feeling the cold, but a clever monkey who had stolen a mirror and run off with it to the top of the cage. Defiant, mischievous, amusing. Her eyes ran over the staff as if they were waxworks, she clutched Sir Edward by the arm, and her voice warm with laughter made them all feel slightly ridiculous.

"Darling! Look at that! How too, too feudal! The tenantry. The embattled tenantry! Aren't they sweet?"

There was a shade of apology in Sir Edward's laugh. "Everyone is here to welcome you, Joy."

Larry detached himself from a watching post behind the others. He came forward with his most enchanting smile, his charm firing on all cylinders.

"Welcome." He stretched a hand to his father. "We all hope you'll both be as happy as sandboys—whatever they are."

Joy Quayle gave herself time to look him over. "You're as handsome as your father."

The introductions were continuing. Sir Edward was giving each of the staff a flattering biography, and the new Lady Quayle listened with a detached and tolerant smile. Sir Edward left Trudy for the last.

"And this is our very dear Trudy—the heart of the house—she holds the key to our affections and our store cupboards, she remembers our appointments and writes our letters, staves off our creditors and adds up the money we haven't got."

The mocking monkey eyes rested on Trudy. "A paragon."

Lady Quayle's glance had gone back to the maids in their starched caps and aprons. "Wherever did they get those period clothes? They're museum pieces. They look as if we were going to make an Edwardian film. I'll see about it in the morning." Her roving eye fell on the bowl of white chrysanthemums that had cost so alarmingly much and that Trudy had spent time trying to make look twice as many as they were. Joy Quayle's lazy mocking amusement ticked off the flowers. "In heaven's name who ordered the funeral spray? Someone take them away. Put them on ice while we look for the coffin."

Skeat, highly offended, stepped forward, picked up the bowl, and disappeared through the green baize door that led to the servants' quarters.

Sir Edward realized that it was time to end the ceremony. "How about getting changed—and a drink—and I'm sure Mrs. Skeat has got us a grand dinner."

THE party scattered. Trudy moved towards the library where she had always worked. Larry, who had already changed, followed her, lit two cigarettes and they drew a first slow breath before either of them spoke.

"She's extremely attractive," said Larry precisely.

"She's horrible."

"Trudy, dear, you promised to co-operate, do stop looking as if you were going to howl."

"Oh, Larry!"

The tears spilled over. He wiped her face and kissed her. "I must go now," he said softly.

Trudy was the last to join them in the drawing-room. Till now she had always been one of the family. She had never questioned the arrangement. To-night she felt as if she were an intruder. They were laughing as she came into the room.

Joy Quayle's eyes widened. "Why it's little Miss Ridley. To-morrow we can talk about the housekeeping."

The sentence was one of dismissal. It was as pointed as if she had been shown the door.

Larry put a hand under her arm and with the other he pushed a glass between her stiff fingers.

She emptied her glass in order to free her hands. The drink ran cold and tasteless down her throat. She put down the glass, caught Larry's eyes and sent out a signal of distress.

"I want to bring the housekeeping books up to date," she whispered. "Lady Quayle will want to see them to-morrow. I'll get Ellen to give me something on a tray. You make my excuses."

She had expected him to protest. He didn't. "Maybe you have the right idea," he said. "You beetle off. I'll fix it with the others."

IT was eleven o'clock next morning when Lady Quayle found her way into the library where Trudy had all the books ready for her inspection.

Lady Quayle's manner was businesslike, the employer to the employed. She went quickly through the household accounts like a woman accustomed to deal with money matters. "And isn't there anywhere else you can work?"

"Why, yes. There's a small room at the end of the passage."

"Good. We might want this room."

The following morning, missing Trudy, Sir Edward discovered her in the little room at the end of the passage.

"Why are you hiding yourself here, child?"

She had an answer ready. "I'm more comfortable here. No one disturbs anything. I can even be untidy."

He glanced about him frowning. "Is that true? You're sure you like it here?"

"Quite sure, Sir Edward."

"And I didn't see you at lunch yesterday."

"I had it on a tray. I've been busy. We're all going to have a lovely time with lots of parties, only we must get organized first."

He patted her shoulder. "Promise me if everything isn't right for you you'll tell me. I'd never forgive myself if you were neglected. I loved your father though we were very different sort of people. When we were both up at Balliol we often 'heard the chimes at midnight.' That fellow Shakespeare could put in a phrase that would take half a lifetime to explain."

LADY QUAYLE was certainly calling the tune. The gaiety that had been spontaneous was now organized. Where once everything had been modest and often on credit, now everything was luxurious and paid for on the nail.

In the months that followed Trudy found her place. In the past she had run the house as a daughter might have done. Now it was a job of work.

Larry avoided her and it was by accident that they found themselves together one day in the drawing-room. Trudy turned to look at him more closely. His face was drawn, there were shadows under his eyes, he looked as if he had not slept for nights.

"What's wrong with you? You wanted it this way, didn't you?"

"Yes." He shrugged his shoulders. His voice sounded tired. "Let it ride, Trudy."

"No. What's wrong?" she repeated. "I had the impression that it was all going marvellously to plan. I've co-operated. I've watched you be a lap dog. I've stuck it because you told me it was all for the best. I've a right to know what's wrong."

"Very well. I'll tell you what's wrong. I'll tell you where I miscalculated." His voice was harsh and strained. "It's wrong that you should be working in a box of a room, having your meals on a tray. Father said it—you were the heart of the house. The heart doesn't beat happily any more and look what that's done to the house." Her lips parted in amazement, her spirit warmed to life. He moved away from her. "Let's cut it out. Let's not start discussing it. We said we'd go through with it and we're not going back on our work."

The door slammed noisily behind him. A moment later Lady Quayle must have come into the hall, for Larry's voice had changed, and become honey sweet and full of laughter.

"Now, my pretty stepmama, are you ready? The car's at the door, your husband is waiting for us at the Club, the weather is propitious, and your new hat is enchanting."

She laughed smugly. "Larry you are such a consolation to a woman—whisper—a woman who will never see thirty again."

"A woman is as old as her heart. You'll be young for ever."

Trudy was savagely glad she had only to type their letters, answer their phone, and keep their accounts. She didn't have to play a part in this tiresome comedy of manners.

THAT morning a month later everything had seemed just as usual. Trudy had felt no warning of disaster. Larry had come into her room to ask for a telephone number.

The door burst open unceremoniously. Skeat, the imperturbable, rushed into the room. He was white and breathless.

"Mr. Larry—quick—quick—the master. I took up his breakfast as usual and——"

Larry pushed past him and tore up the stairs. It was too late. Sir Edward had died of coronary thrombosis.

Dr. Hamilton sought out Trudy to help him with the funeral arrangements. Her eyes were red and swollen. Since Skeat had brought her the news she had seen no one.

The doctor gave her a fatherly glance of compassion. "You mustn't cry. It's hard I know, my dear. You were like one of the family. He went peacefully and perhaps it was for the best."

"How could it be for the best? He was happy."

He sat down, like a man who was tired. He thought for a moment before he spoke. "He lived in a glass house, you see. Some day someone might have thrown a stone."

"Not while he had Larry to protect him."

He shook his head. "Sir Edward was a charming man, but he was an anacronism. Almost an eccentric. This way he was able to keep his dream world to the end. And he died in the way he would have liked to die, making no fuss, giving no trouble, still the perfect English gentleman."

"But Larry—poor Larry——"

"At least he was prepared. I saw to that."

She sat up straighter. "What do you mean?"

Dr. Hamilton lit a cigarette. He studied her thoughtfully, "No harm in telling you now, my dear. It's two years since I warned Larry. I knew this might happen at any time. Sir Edward himself hadn't an idea. If he had a pain I told him it was indigestion. I hope it was ethical. Larry thought it was for the best. He wanted his father to be happy."

"You mean these last two years Larry has known!"

"Yes, it was hard on Larry. But he could take it. I've known Larry all his life.

"Now——" He got up. "Let's think about what has to be done."

Except as a figure remote, withdrawn, going through a series of correct gestures, Trudy did not see Larry till after the funeral.

Trudy was in the library the day the door closed on the last person who demanded Larry's attention. He came in quietly and stretched himself in the armchair, his long legs in front of him. They smoked in silence.

Larry put out a hand and when she came over and stood beside him he pulled her down to the arm of his chair.

"We did it, Trudy."

"I'm so glad."

"Butterflies don't live long."

"A little season in the sun."

He leant his head against her, his eyes half-closed. "Dear Trudy, you took so much on the chin."

"Why didn't you tell me he was ill, Larry?"

"You might have given the game away, darling. Some expression on your face—it's an expressive little mug—and why should I burden you with the knowing. You loved him, too."

"You might have done it to justify yourself."

"I was often tempted, darling. You thought me such a heel. Never mind, sweet. We'll make it up to one another later, won't we?"

"Oh yes, Larry—yes."

"Bless you, my little love." The lids dropped over his eyes. His head felt heavy against her heart. When she looked down he was asleep. She smiled and held him close.

END

Books (*Continued from page* 38)

stories of this fascinating quarter: its past more than its present.

INDIAN trends, affairs and personalities are Sir Stanley Reed's concern in **"The India I Knew"** (Odhams, 21s.). He joined *The Times Of India* in 1897 and edited it from 1907-23, so writes from inside knowledge of contacts with those who mattered, from Viceroys and Provincial Governors to Gandhi and other Indian leaders. A serious, formal, sobering present for any nostalgic Anglo-Indian still brooding on his chota-peg days.

ALAN VILLIERS has sailed a good deal in and about the Indian Ocean. What better sea-book, then, than **"The Indian Ocean"** (Museum Press, 21s.) for one nautical-minded? He covers famous voyageurs, pirates, pearlers, slavers, whalers, shipwrecks, adventure, writing with a sailor's passion for it all.

FOR those who like to huddle over ye yule logs reading of braw Arctic travel, Father Bernard R. Hubbard's **"Alaskan Odyssey"** (Hale, 18s.) should be sufficiently bracing. This Glacier Priest of Alaska, the Yukon and the Aleutians goes mushing through blizzards with dog-teams, climbing chimneys on snow peaks and ministering to Eskimo settlements. It's a hard pioneer life, hardily portrayed.

AND now, why not a breath of summer to cheer our Christmas? The colour and half-tone plates in W. E. Shewell-Cooper's **"The Royal Gardeners: King George VI And His Queen"** (Cassell, 12s. 6d.) are a joy. He writes of the Buckingham Palace, Balmoral, Windsor Castle, Royal Lodge and Sandringham gardens as an expert sensitive to Majesty's pride in them, disclosing incidentally that the late King did not like coleus or rock gardens in normal ones. A fine quarto for all garden-lovers.

H. E. BATES, I imagine, was agreeably astonished that his latest novel should serialize in a popular woman's weekly, for the **"Love For Lydia"** (Michael Joseph, 12s. 6d.) is anything but platonic and steps outside normal "family interest" brackets. Under the stimulus of winter skating and sultry summerhouse dalliance with the hero, Lydia—plain, prim, enigmatic to begin with—blossoms into a forth-right nympho who scatters her favours regardless like petals in June, leaves in October, bringing bitterness to her first lover, tragedy to others, herself to collapse, after car-binges to night-spots that seem "the thing" in modern Arcady. The story has all the Bates fervour, with vivid Midlands scene-painting.

ADMIRERS of William McFee will be glad to know that his retired sea-philosopher, Mr. Spenlove, figures again in **"The Adopted"** (Faber, 12s. 6d.) which concerns the meeting of a young seaman, adopted as a child by Americans, with a "sister" who was also adopted by another American family. A tense emotional relationship develops between them which might be simplified by disclosing a birth-secret, but he cannot be told. Mr. McFee handles the situation with his usual persuasive skill, plus crisp dialogue.

GIOVANNI GUARESCHI is unrepentant in re-introducing two previous favourites in **"Don Camillo And The Prodigal Son"** (Gollancz, 10s. 6d.). Any priest offended by his treatment of Don, he says, can break the biggest possible candle over his head. Any Communist offended by Mayor Peppone may break a hammer and sickle on his back. Anyone offended by the conversations of his Christ he can't help, for they are just the voice of his conscience. Thus, the way is cleared for our further enjoyment of these delicious episodes of Po village life, written with such naïve humour. One concerns a village choirboy who couldn't sing until Camillo kicked him in the pants, and after training for the city opera, couldn't sing there properly until Camillo went behind (in two senses) and gave him another hefty one!

AN Italian author poles apart is Curzio Malaparte whose **"The Skin"** (Alvin Redman, 15s.) portrays all the drama and squalor of Naples after the 1943 liberation. It has been praised abroad and has, indeed, something of the fire of genius. Unfortunately, a realist who sets out to "pour everything in" may easily slop over. Within the first hundred pages I struck something about coloured U.S. troops and Italian prostitutes which revolted even me. Definitely for hard-boiled adults only.

POSSIBLY an educated French West African coloured girl of part Portuguese descent, nurse in a maternity clinic, could tell her story as well as Christine Garnier makes her in **"White People Stare At Me"** (Putnam, 10s. 6d.), translated from the French. It is so vividly done that we accept it. She has a French magistrate for lover; reverts sadly to her own people when he supplants her with the doctor's Parisian wife, having wondered, in her native simplicity, at "the incurable mania of white people for mixing mental agony with their lovemaking." An exceptional novel in a haunting setting.

THE care Pearl S. Buck devoted to Chinese background in *The Good Earth* she concentrates on Japanese in **"The Hidden Flower"** (Methuen, 12s. 6d.) making a delicate idyll of the love of a U.S. lieutenant for a well-bred Jap girl brought up in America and their Buddhist wedding. Returning to the States as wife, she finds his parents against her and the marriage breaks tragically. Women, I think, will specially like Josui, who has none of that cold ferocity which in war is the obverse side of gentle Jap refinement. (*Continued on page* 76)

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A DUTCH story salt with the sea is Jan de Hartog's **"Captain Jan"** (Cleaver-Hume Press, 15s.) about life on tugboats towing dredgers, floating cranes, etc., across the Atlantic: quietly, sincerely written from first-hand experience.

RICHARD KAUFMANN'S **"Heaven Pays No Dividends"** (Jarrolds, 12s. 6d.), translated from the German, is a sound character study of a lawyer-diplomat's son, his reactions to the three daughters of a dressmaker-neighbour, widow of a Russian aristocrat, and the effect on their lives of the rise of the Nazis and war. It told me much about German family life.

WE know of daughters who dedicate their lives to a possessive invalid mother. Liz Burke gives up hers to tending a crippled married sister whom she loves, but who had never needed her before her accident, in Nelia Gardner White's **"Woman At The Window"** (Constable, 12s. 6d.): a dominantly feminine tale of family relationships.

TOO rarely, these days, have we a novel from F. Tennyson Jesse. **"Tom Fool"** (Evans, 10s. 6d.) is a reprint of her widely praised story about the young adventurer who loved birds, women and ships.

OTHER books recommended to readers include:

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

"At Cherry-Tree Farm," by Margaret Kent. Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter (Harrap, 3s. 6d. each); **"Ray Of The Rainbows,"** by Mortimer Batten (Hollis & Carter, 16s.); **"B.B.C. Children's Hour Annual,"** edited by May E. Jenkin (Burke, 9s. 6d.); **"The Life Of A Circus Bear,"** by Warren Tute (Cassell, 6s.); **"The Children's Jolly Book"** (Odhams, 6s. 6d.); **"Fish Knight And Sea Maiden,"** by Frances Dale (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d.); **"The Wind In The Wood,"** by "B. B." (Hollis & Carter, 18s.).

FICTION

"Master Jim Probity," by Frank Swinnerton (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d.); **"Westward The Sun,"** by Geoffrey Cotterell (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 12s. 6d.); **"The Fast Buck,"** by James Hadley Chase (Robert Hale, 10s. 6d.); **"So Runs The River,"** by Norah C. James (Macdonald, 9s. 6d.); **"Jabadao,"** by Anne de Tourville (Britannicus Liber, 10s. 6d.); **"The Sun Dances At Easter,"** by Austin Clarke (Andrew Melrose, 12s. 6d.); **"The Long, Long Night,"** by W. Townend (Rich & Cowan, 10s. 6d.); **"Woman In Ambush,"** by Rex Beach (Robert Hale, 10s. 6d.); **"Cuckoo,"** by Anne Piper (Putnam, 10s. 6d.); **"Sword Of State,"** by Agnes Furlong (Harrap, 7s. 6d.).

MISCELLANEOUS

Pocket editions: **"The Schoolgirl's Pocket Book"** (Evans, 5s.); **"The Imitation Of Christ,"** by Thomas à Kempis (Penguin, 2s. 6d.); **"Mediaeval Latin Lyrics,"** translated by Helen Waddell (Penguin, 3s.); **"Psychiatry To-day,"** by David Stafford-Clark (Pelican, 2s. 6d.).

Biographies: **"Autobiography"** and **"Ray Of Darkness,"** by Margiad Evans (Barker, 12s. 6d. each); **"Beryl Grey,"** by Pigeon Crowle (Faber, 12s. 6d.); **"The Journey Outward,"** by Maurice Collis (Faber, 21s.); **"Quartet In Heaven,"** by Sheila Kaye-Smith (Cassell, 15s.); **"The Woman Golfer,"** by Louis T. Stanley (Macdonald, 12s. 6d.); **"Snowflake,"** by Paul Gallico (Michael Joseph, 5s.).

Cookery: **"Beating Austerity In The Kitchen,"** by Lady Peacock (Faber, 8s. 6d.); **"The Home Book Of French Cookery,"** by Mme. Germaine Carter (Faber, 15s.).

END

A Room For Christmas

(*Continued from page 32*)

not take in what she had said. Then obviously overcome with emotion, he put out his hand towards a chair.

"You will forgive me if I sit down," he muttered.

"Of course," Lady Victoria sounded a little flustered.

"I can't believe it. Arthur dead! Why I was with him only a few weeks ago. He asked me to stay for Christmas. We talked about this place. . . . 'I want you to see it, old chap,' he said. We talked about you, Lady Victoria. 'You must meet my sister,' Arthur told me, 'wonderful woman, can't think what I would do without her'."

"Arthur said that?" Lady Victoria asked incredulously.

Henry put his hand to his eyes.

"He described you to me—'an aristocrat to her finger tips—you don't see women like her nowadays—they're all paint and peroxide and they talk like second-rate film stars. Victoria's a lady, Henry,' he said. 'You'll understand what I mean because you're one of the old school yourself'."

"If only I had known he felt like that!" The words were scarcely audible, but Henry heard them.

"Arthur had the idea that we should have much in common, that's why he asked me to come here the moment I arrived in England. My ship only docked early this morning at Southampton."

"That's why you hadn't seen the papers," Miss Spending exclaimed, as if the question had been worrying her.

"I expect it was given out on the wireless," Henry replied, "but I'm afraid I never listen if I can help it. I spend my time on board reading. You, too, are a reader, Lady Victoria?"

It was a bow at a venture, but Henry could see a number of books lying about the room.

"Yes, I, too, am a reader," Lady Victoria repeated.

"Arthur used to tell me how clever you were. 'My sister could have done anything if she hadn't preferred to look after me,' he said once."

"I'm afraid he was being flattering," Lady Victoria remarked in a low voice, but there was a faint smile on her lips.

"Poor Arthur, I shall miss him," Henry sighed.

"You've known him long?" Miss Spending enquired.

"No, actually we only met when he was out in Egypt, but we had a lot of mutual friends, and . . . well, you know how it is, one meets someone and feels one has known them for years. I always say it's not a question of how long one has known someone, but how one knows them."

"How true! How true!", Miss Spending was touched by the aptitude of Henry's remark which he had heard in a play to which he had been taken by the widow of General Forthye.

Henry looked round the room. He seemed to be taking in every detail as if he committed it to memory. Then his eyes rested on Lady Victoria.

"I shall never forget coming here," he said softly. "I shall never forget meeting you. I will go now, and you must forgive me for intruding on your grief. One day, perhaps, you will allow me to come again and talk to you of Arthur. I think he would like me to do that."

HE rose to his feet and automatically, almost as if she were dazed, Lady Victoria rose, too. She put out her hand; Henry raised it in a quite unself-conscious gesture to his lips.

"You are exactly what I expected you to be like," he said quietly. "Arthur was right. So very right!" He straightened his shoulders. "I wonder if my taxi has gone?" he asked in a different tone of voice.

"No, I told Burton to keep it," Lady Victoria replied.

"I hired it at the station," Henry answered. "It can take me back and I can wait there for a train to London."

"Oh, no!" Lady Victoria exclaimed. "You must have some tea first, or a drink if you prefer it. Burton will telephone to the station and find out what time the next train leaves."

"That's very kind of you," Henry said in heartfelt tones, "but I don't want to be a nuisance."

Lady Victoria rang the bell.

"Will you have tea or a whisky and soda, Mr. Haslett?" she enquired.

"May I have tea—English tea? I wonder if you know what that means to those of us who have been forced to spend long years abroad? If you won't laugh at me I will tell you that sometimes I've dreamed of tea in the drawing-room with a woman pouring from a silver teapot."

"Tea for Mr. Haslett," Lady Victoria said to Burton who had answered the bell.

"Very good, m'lady. The taxi is waiting, sir."

"Ask him to wait a few minutes more," Henry commanded.

"Very good, sir."

Henry smiled at Lady Victoria.

"It is very kind of you to put up with me for so long. I had looked forward to Christmas at Melchester Hall. Even now I can't believe that Arthur won't walk into the room."

"Poor Arthur," Miss Spending lifted her handkerchief to the corner of her eyes.

"I don't know whether we are right to say 'poor Arthur,'" Henry replied reflectively. "He had so much—a wonderful home, friends, a sister whom he loved devotedly and who loved him. There are worse things than dying. There is living in—loneliness."

"You speak as if you were alone in the world, Mr. Haslett," Lady Victoria said.

"I am completely and absolutely alone," Henry answered. "My mother and father are dead, and I was an only child. I have lived abroad for many years, serving my country in one capacity or another. Now that is finished and I start a new life—alone."

He paused to allow his words to sink in, then added:

"Perhaps you ladies could be kind enough to recommend some small hotel to me in London. Not too expensive—we Empire builders don't all come back millionaires. Do you think it will be difficult to get in anywhere over Christmas?"

Miss Spending coughed and looked at Lady Victoria. The latter sat staring at Henry in a bemused fashion.

"An hotel!" she said at length. Then jerkily as if the words were somehow mesmerized out of her, she added, "but of course, if you care to stay here we will be very pleased to have you."

"You mean that?" Henry's somewhat melancholy face seemed to light up.

"If you won't find it dull," Lady Victoria remarked coquettishly for the first time in her life.

"Dull—with you?" There was a meaning in Henry's voice which could not be mistaken.

"Excuse me, your Ladyship," Burton said from the door, "but the taxi-man can't wait. He says he has another order."

"Let him go, Burton," Lady Victoria cried, and there was a flush on her thin cheeks, and her eyes were shining. "Mr. Haslett will be staying for . . . Christmas."

END

1.12.52

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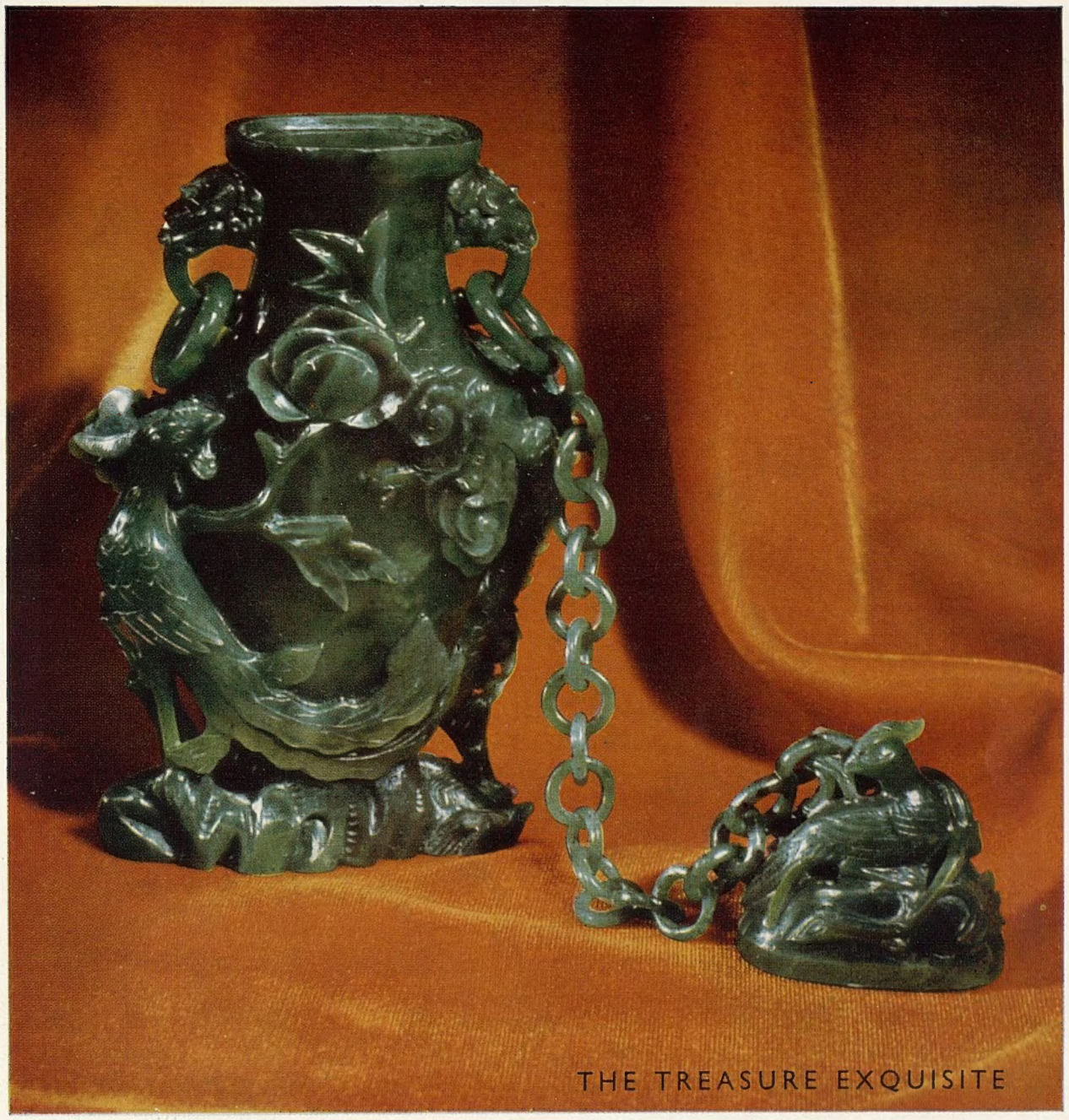

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